

THIS BOOK IS PRESENTED BY THE  
GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF  
AMERICA AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE FRIEND-  
SHIP AND GOOD-WILL OF THE PEOPLE OF THE  
UNITED STATES TOWARDS THE PEOPLE OF  
INDIA.





तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय

SANTINIKETAN  
VISWA BHARATI  
LIBRARY

843(T)

H875m

V.1

# LES MISÉRABLES

Victor Mari<sup>o</sup> Hugo was born at Be<sup>l</sup>ançon, France, on 26 February, 1802, and educated in Paris and Madrid. He died in Paris on 22 May, 1885, and is buried in the Pantheon. Among his chief works are Notre Dame (1831), Les Misérables (1862), Toilers of the Sea (1866), The Laughing Man (1869), and 'Ninety-Three (1874), all of which are included in the Nelson Classics. The Complete Works of Victor Hugo are published, in French, in the Collection Nelson.

# LES MISERABLES

VICTOR HUGO

*Volume One*

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS LTD  
LONDON EDINBURGH PARIS MELBOURNE  
TORONTO AND NEW YORK

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS LTD

Parkside Works Edinburgh 9  
3 Henrietta Street London WC2  
312 Flinders Street Melbourne C1  
91-93 Wellington Street West Toronto 1

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS  
385 Madison Avenue New York 17

SOCIÉTÉ FRANÇAISE D'ÉDITIONS NELSON  
25 rue Henri Barbusse Paris V<sup>e</sup>  
C

# CONTENTS

## PART I FANTINE

### BOOK I

1	M. Myriel . . . . .	13
2	M. Myriel becomes Monseigneur Welcome . . . . .	16
3	A Hard Bishopric . . . . .	19
4	Words resembling Words . . . . .	21
5	Monseigneur's Cassocks Last too Long . . . . .	26
6	By whom the House was Guarded . . . . .	28
7	Cravatte . . . . .	34
8	Philosophy after Drinking . . . . .	37
9	The Bishop faces a New Light . . . . .	41
10	Monseigneur's Solitude . . . . .	52
11	What he Believed . . . . .	54
12	What he Thought . . . . .	58

### BOOK II

1	The Close of a Day's March . . . . .	62
2	Prudence Recommended to Wisdom . . . . .	73
3	The Heroism of Passive Obedience . . . . .	76
4	Cheesemaking at Pontarlier . . . . .	82
5	Tranquillity . . . . .	85
6	Jean Valjean . . . . .	87
7	Widening the Gap . . . . .	92
8	The Man Awake . . . . .	94
9	What he Did . . . . .	96
10	The Bishop at Work . . . . .	100
11	Little Gervais . . . . .	103

## CONTENTS

### BOOK III

1	The Year 1817 . . . . .	111
2	A Double Quartette . . . . .	115
3	Four to Four . . . . .	119
4	Tholomyès sings a Spanish Song . . . . .	12
5	At Bombarda's . . . . .	124
6	The Death of a Horse . . . . .	131
7	The Joyous End of Joy . . . . .	133

### BOOK IV

1	Two Mothers Meet . . . . .	137
2	A Sketch of Two Ugly Faces . . . . .	146
3	The Lark . . . . .	148

### BOOK V

1	Progress in Black-bead Making . . . . .	151
2	Sums Lodged at Lafitte's . . . . .	156
3	M. Madeleine goes into Mourning . . . . .	159
4	Vague Flashes on the Horizon . . . . .	160
5	Father Fauchelevant . . . . .	164
6	Thirty-five Francs spent in Morality . . . . .	167
7	Success of Madame Victurnien . . . . .	170
8	M. Bamatabois' Amusements . . . . .	177
9	The Police Office . . . . .	179

### BOOK VI

1	The Commencement of Repose . . . . .	190
2	How "Jean" became "Champ" . . . . .	193

### BOOK VII

1	Sister Simplicie . . . . .	203
2	Scaufflaire's Perspicacity . . . . .	205
3	A Tempest in a Brain . . . . .	210

## CONTENTS

4	Sufferings in Sleep . . . . .	226
5	Obstacles . . . . .	229
6	Sister Simplice is Sorely Tried . . . . .	240
7	At Arras . . . . .	246
8	Inside the Court . . . . .	250
9	The Trial . . . . .	254
10	The System of Denegations . . . . .	260
11	Champlainthieu is Astounded . . . . .	268

## BOOK VIII

1	M. Madeleine looks at his Hair . . . . .	273
2	Fantine is Happy . . . . .	275
3	Javert is Satisfied . . . . .	279
4	Authority resumes its Rights . . . . .	283
5	A Very Proper Tomb . . . . .	287

## PART II COSETTE

### BOOK I

1	On the Nivelles Road . . . . .	295
2	Hougomont . . . . .	297
3	June 18, 1815 . . . . .	304
4	A . . . . .	307
5	The Quid Obscurum of Battles . . . . .	309
6	Four o'Clock in the Afternoon . . . . .	313
7	Napoleon in a Good Humour . . . . .	316
8	The Emperor asks the Guide a Question . . . . .	322
9	A Surprise . . . . .	325
10	The Plateau of Mont-Saint-Jean . . . . .	329
11	Bulow to the Rescue . . . . .	335
12	The Guard . . . . .	336
13	The Catastrophe . . . . .	338
14	The Last Square . . . . .	341



## CONTENTS

15	Quot Libras in Duce ? . . . . .	343
16	Ought Waterloo to be Applauded ? . . . . .	348
17	Restoration of Divine Right . . . . .	350
18	The Battle-field by Night . . . . .	353

## BOOK II

1	No. 24,601 becomes 9,430 . . . . .	361
2	Two Lines of a Doubtful Origin . . . . .	364
3	On Board the "Orion" . . . . .	368

## BOOK III

1	The Water Question at Montfermeil . . . . .	375
2	Two Full-length Portraits . . . . .	378
3	Men want Wine and Horses Water . . . . .	383
4	A Doll comes on the Stage . . . . .	386
5	Boulatruelle may have been Right . . . . .	391
6	Cosette in the Dark with the Stranger . . . . .	396
7	Is he Rich or Poor ? . . . . .	399
8	Thenardier at Work . . . . .	416
9	Thenardier has One Regret . . . . .	423

## BOOK IV

1	Master Gorbeau . . . . .	429
2	The Nest of an Owl and a Linnet . . . . .	435
3	Two Evils make a Good . . . . .	436
4	The Remarks of the Chief Lodger . . . . .	440
5	A New Tenant . . . . .	442

## BOOK V

1	Strategic Zigzags . . . . .	446
2	Consult the Plan of Paris in 1727 . . . . .	449
3	Attempts to Escape . . . . .	452
4	A Thing Impossible were the Streets lit with Gas . . . . .	454

## CONTENTS

5	The Beginning of an Enigma . . . . .	458
6	The Man with the Bell . . . . .	464
7	How Javert only found the Nest . . . . .	467

## BOOK VI

1	No. 62 Rue Picpus . . . . .	476
2	The Obedience of Martin Verga . . . . .	479
3	The Boarding School . . . . .	483
4	Amusements . . . . .	487
5	A Few Profiles from the Shadow . . . . .	490

## BOOK VII

1	How to get into a Convent . . . . .	492
2	Fauchelevant faces the Difficulty . . . . .	500
3	Mother Innocent . . . . .	502
4	A Plan of Escape . . . . .	513
5	A Drunkard is not Immortal . . . . .	519
6	Between Four Planks . . . . .	524
7	Fauchelevant has an Idea . . . . .	526
8	A Successful Examination . . . . .	533
9	In the Convent . . . . .	536

## PART III MARIUS

### BOOK I

1	Parvulus . . . . .	541
2	Little Gavroche . . . . .	543

### BOOK II

1	Ninety Years and Two-and-thirty Teeth . . . . .	546
2	Centenarian Aspirations . . . . .	549
3	Basque and Nicolette . . . . .	550
4	Two who do not form a Pair . . . . .	552

## CONTENTS

### BOOK III

1	An Old Drawing-room . . . . .	555
2	A Red Spectre of that Day . . . . .	557
3	Requiescant ! . . . . .	563
4	The End of the Brigand . . . . .	564
5	Marius meets a Churchwarden . . . . .	568
6	Some Petticoat . . . . .	574
7	Marble against Granite . . . . .	579

### BOOK IV

1	A Group that nearly became Historical . . . . .	585
2	A Funeral Oration . . . . .	591
3	Marius is Astonished . . . . .	595
4	The Back Room of the Café Musian . . . . .	597
5	Enlargement of the Horizon . . . . .	602
6	Res Angusta . . . . .	606

### BOOK V

1	Marius is Indigent . . . . .	609
2	Marius Poor . . . . .	610
3	Marius Grows . . . . .	613
4	M. Mabœuf . . . . .	617
5	The Substitute . . . . .	622

### BOOK VI

1	Lux Facta Est . . . . .	627
2	The Effect of Spring . . . . .	630
3	Mame Bougon is Thunderstruck . . . . .	633
4	An Eclipse . . . . .	636

PART I.—FANTINE.



## BOOK I.

### CHAPTER I.

#### M. MYRIEL.

IN 1815 M. Charles François Bienvenu Myriel was Bishop of D——. He was a man of about seventy-five years of age, and had held the see of D—— since 1806. Although the following details in no way affect our narrative, it may not be useless to quote the rumours that were current about him at the moment when he came to the diocese, for what is said of men, whether it be true or false, often occupies as much space in their life, and especially in their destiny, as what they do. M. Myriel was the son of a councillor of the Aix Parliament. It was said that his father, who intended that he should be his successor, married him at the age of eighteen or twenty, according to a not uncommon custom in parliamentary families. Charles Myriel, in spite of this marriage (so people said), had been the cause of much tattle. He was well built, though of short stature, elegant, graceful, and witty; and the earlier part of his life was devoted to the world and to gallantry. The Revolution came, events hurried on, and the parliamentary families, decimated and hunted down, became dispersed. M. Charles Myriel emigrated to Italy in the early part of the Revolution, and his

wife, who had been long suffering from a chest complaint, died there, leaving no children. What next took place in M. Myriel's destiny? Did the overthrow of the old French society, the fall of his own family, and the tragic spectacles of '93, more frightful perhaps to the *émigrés* who saw them from a distance with the magnifying power of terror, cause ideas of renunciation and solitude to germinate in him? Was he, in the midst of one of the distractions and affections which occupied his life, suddenly assailed by one of those mysterious and terrible blows which often prostrate, by striking at his heart, a man whom public catastrophes could not overthrow by attacking him in his existence and his fortune? No one could have answered these questions; all that was known was that when he returned from Italy he was a priest.

In 1804 M. Myriel was Curé of B——. He was already aged, and lived in great retirement. Towards the period of the coronation a small matter connected with his curacy, no one remembers what, took him to Paris. Among other powerful persons he applied to Cardinal Fesch on behalf of his parishioners. One day, when the Emperor was paying a visit to his uncle, the worthy curé, who was waiting in the anteroom, saw his Majesty pass. Napoleon, noticing this old man regard him with some degree of curiosity, turned and asked sharply,—

"Who is this good man who is staring at me?"

"Sire," M. Myriel said, "you are looking at a good man, and I at a great man. We may both profit by it."

The Emperor, on the same evening, asked the Cardinal the curé's name, and some time after M. Myriel, to his great surprise, learned that he was nominated Bishop of D——. What truth, by the way, was there in the stories about M. Myriel's early life? no one knew, for few persons had been acquainted with his family before the Revolution. M. Myriel was fated to undergo the lot of every newcomer to a little town, where there are many mouths that speak, and but few heads that think.

He was obliged to undergo it, though he was bishop, and because he was bishop. But, after all, the stories in which his name was mingled were only stories, rumours, words, remarks, less than words, mere *palabres*, to use a term borrowed from the energetic language of the South. Whatever they might be, after ten years of episcopacy and residence at D——, all this gossip, which at the outset affords matter of conversation for little towns and little people, had fallen into deep oblivion. No one would have dared to speak of it, no one have dared to remember it.

M. Myriel had arrived at D——, accompanied by an old maid, Mlle. Baptistine, who was his sister, and ten years younger than himself. Their only servant was a female of the same age as Mademoiselle, of the name of Madame Magloire, who, after having been the servant of M. le Curé, now assumed the double title of waiting-woman to Mademoiselle, and housekeeper to Monseigneur. Mlle. Baptistine was a tall, pale, slim, gentle person; she realized the ideal of what the word "respectable" expresses, for it seems necessary for a woman to be a mother in order to be venerable. She had never been pretty, but her whole life, which had been but a succession of pious works, had eventually cast over her a species of whiteness and brightness, and in growing older she had acquired what may be called the beauty of goodness. What had been thinness in her youth had become in her maturity transparency, and through this transparency the angel could be seen. She seemed to be a shadow, there was hardly enough body for a sex to exist! she was a little quantity of matter containing a light—an excuse for a soul to remain upon the earth. Madame Magloire was a fair, plump, busy little body, always short of breath—in the first place, through her activity, and, secondly, in consequence of an asthma.

On his arrival M. Myriel was installed in his episcopal palace with all the honours allotted by the imperial decrees which classify the Bishop immediately after a



Major-General. The Mayor and the President paid him the first visit, and he on his side paid the first visit to the General and the Prefect. When the installation was over the town waited to see its bishop at work.

---

## CHAPTER II.

### M. MYRIEL BECOMES MONSEIGNEUR WELCOME.

THE Episcopal Palace of D—— adjoined the hospital. It was a spacious, handsome mansion, built at the beginning of the last century by Monseigneur Henri Puget, Doctor in Theology of the Faculty of Paris, and Abbé of Simore, who was Bishop of D—— in 1712. This palace was a true seigneurial residence: everything had a noble air in it—the episcopal apartments, the reception rooms, the bedrooms, the court of honour, which was very wide, with arcades after the old Florentine fashion, and the gardens planted with magnificent trees. In the dining-room, a long and superb gallery on the ground floor, Monseigneur Henri Puget had given a state dinner on July 29, 1714, to Messeigneurs Charles Brûlart de Genlis, Archiepiscopal Prince of Embrun, Antoine de Mesgrigny, Capuchin and Bishop of Grasse, Philip de Vendôme, Grand Prior of France and Abbé of St. Honoré de Lérins, François de Berton de Grillon, Baronial Bishop of Vence, Cæsar de Sabran de Forcalquier, Lord Bishop of Glandève, and Jean Soanen, priest of the oratory, preacher in ordinary to the King, and Lord Bishop of Senz. The portraits of these seven reverend personages decorated the dining-room, and the memorable date, JULY 29, 1714, was engraved in golden letters on a white marble tablet.

The hospital was a small, single-storeyed house with a little garden. Three days after his arrival the Bishop visited it, and when his visit was over asked the Director to be kind enough to come to his house.

"How many patients have you at this moment?" he asked.

"Twenty-six, Monseigneur."

"The number I counted," said the Bishop.

"The beds are very close together," the Director continued.

"I noticed it."

"The wards are only bedrooms, and difficult to ventilate."

"I thought so."

"And then, when the sun shines, the garden is small for the convalescents."

"I said so to myself."

"During epidemics, and we have had the typhus this year, and had miliary fever two years ago, we have as many as one hundred patients, and do not know what to do with them."

"That thought occurred to me."

"What would you have, Monseigneur!" the Director said; "we must put up with it."

This conversation had taken place in the dining-hall on the ground floor. The Bishop was silent for a moment, and then turned smartly to the Director.

"How many beds," he asked him, "do you think that this room alone would hold?"

"Monseigneur's dining-room?" the stupefied Director asked.

The Bishop looked round the room, and seemed to be judging its capabilities.

"It would hold twenty beds," he said, as if speaking to himself, and then, raising his voice, he added,—

"Come, Director, I will tell you what it is. There is evidently a mistake. You have twenty-six persons in five or six small rooms. There are only three of us, and we have room for fifty. There is a mistake, I repeat; you have my house and I have yours. Restore me mine."

The next day the twenty-six poor patients were installed in the Bishop's palace, and the Bishop was in the

hospital. M. Myriel had no property, as his family had been ruined by the Revolution. His sister had an annuity of 500 francs, which had sufficed at the curacy for personal expenses. M. Myriel, as Bishop, received from the State 15,000 francs a year. On the same day that he removed to the hospital, M. Myriel settled the employment of that sum once for all in the following way. We copy here a note in his own handwriting.

“THE REGULATION OF MY HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES.

“For the little Seminary, 1,500 frcs. Congregation of the Mission, 100 frcs. The Lazarists of Montdidier, 100 frcs. Seminary of Foreign Missions at Paris, 200 frcs. Congregation of the Holy Ghost, 150 frcs. Religious establishments in the Holy Land, 100 frcs. Societies of Maternal Charity, 300 frcs. Additional for the one at Arles, 50 frcs. Works for improvement of prisons, 400 frcs. Relief and deliverance of prisoners, 500 frcs. For liberation of fathers imprisoned for debt, 1,000 frcs. Addition to the salary of poor schoolmasters in the diocese, 2,000 frcs. Distribution of grain in the Upper Alps, 100 frcs. Ladies' Society for gratuitous instruction of poor girls at D——, Manosque, and Sisteron, 1,500 frcs. For the poor, 6,000 frcs. Personal expenses, 1,000 frcs.—Total, 15,000 frcs.”

During the whole time he held the see of D——, M. Myriel made no change in this arrangement. He called this, as we see, regulating his household expenses. The arrangement was accepted with a smile by Mlle. Baptistine, for that sainted woman regarded M. Myriel at once as her brother and her bishop; her friend according to nature, her superior according to the Church. She loved and venerated him in the simplest way. When he spoke she bowed, when he acted she assented. The servant alone, Madame Magloire, murmured a little.

## CHAPTER III.

## A HARD BISHOPRIC.

THE Bishop converted his coach into alms, but did not the less make his visitations. The diocese of D—— is fatiguing; there are few plains and many mountains, and hardly any roads; twenty-two curacies, forty-one vicarages, and two hundred and eighty-five chapels of ease. It was a task to visit all these, but the Bishop managed it. He went on foot when the place was near, in a calash when it was in the plain, and in a *cacolet* when it was in the mountains. The two old females generally accompanied him, but when the journey was too wearying for them he went alone.

One day he arrived at Senez, which is an old Episcopal town, mounted on a donkey; his purse, which was very light at the time, had not allowed him any other equipage. The Mayor of the city came to receive him at the door of the Bishop's Palace, and saw him dismount with scandalized eyes. A few cits were laughing round him. "M. Mayor and gentlemen," the Bishop said, "I see what it is that scandalizes you. You consider it great pride for a poor priest to ride an animal which our Saviour once upon a time bestrode. I did so through necessity, I assure you, and not through vanity."

On his tours the Bishop was indulgent and gentle, and preached less than he conversed. His reasonings and models were never far-fetched, and to the inhabitants of one country he quoted the example of an adjacent country. In those cantons where people were harsh to the needy he would say, "Look at the people of Briançon. They have given the indigent, the widows, and the orphans the right of mowing their fields three days before all the rest. They rebuild their houses gratuitously when they are in ruins. Hence it is a country blessed of God. For one hundred years not a single murder has been committed there." To those

eager for grain and good crops, he said, "Look at the people of Embrun. If a father of a family at harvest-time has his sons in the army, his daughters serving in the town, or if he be ill or prevented from toil, the Curé recommends him in his sermon; and on Sunday after Mass all the villagers, men, women, and children, go into his field, and cut and carry home his crop." To families divided by questions of money or inheritance he said, "Look at the Highlanders of Devolny, a country so wild that the nightingale is not heard once in fifty years. Well, when the father of a family dies there the boys go off to seek their fortune, and leave the property to the girls, so that they may obtain husbands." In those parts where the farmers are fond of lawsuits, and ruin themselves in writs, he would say, "Look at those good peasants of the Valley of Queyras. There are three thousand souls there. Why, it is like a little republic. Neither judge nor bailiff is known there, and the Mayor does everything. He divides the imposts, taxes everybody conscientiously, settles quarrels gratis, allots patrimonies without fees, gives sentences without costs, and is obeyed because he is a just man among simple men." In villages where there was no schoolmaster he again quoted the people of Queyras. "Do you know what they do? As a small place, containing only twelve or fifteen hearths, cannot always support a master, they have schoolmasters paid by the whole valley, who go from village to village, spending a week in one, ten days in another, and teaching. These masters go to the fairs, where I have seen them. They can be recognized by the pens they carry in their hat-band. Those who only teach reading have but one pen; those who teach reading and arithmetic have two; those who teach reading, arithmetic, and Latin have three. But what a disgrace it is to be ignorant! Do like the people of Queyras."

He spoke thus, gravely and paternally. When examples failed him he invented parables, going straight to the point, with few phrases and a good deal of imagery.

His was the eloquence of the Apostles, convincing and persuading.

---

## CHAPTER IV.

## WORKS RESEMBLING WORDS.

THE Bishop's conversation was affable and lively. He condescended to the level of the two old females who spent their life near him, and when he laughed it was a schoolboy's laugh. Madame Magloire was fond of calling him "Your Grandeur." One day he rose from his easy chair and went to fetch a book from his library; as it was on one of the top shelves, and as the Bishop was short, he could not reach it. "Madame Magloire," he said, "bring me a chair, for my Grandeur does not rise to that shelf."

One of his distant relatives, the Comtesse de Lô, rarely let an opportunity slip to enumerate in his presence what she called the "hopes" of her three sons. She had several very old relatives close to death's door, of whom her sons were the natural heirs. The youngest of the three would inherit from a great-aunt 100,000 francs a year; the second would succeed to his uncle's dukedom, the third to his grandfather's peerage. The Bishop generally listened in silence to this innocent and pardonable maternal display. Once, however, he seemed more dreamy than usual, while Madame de Lô was repeating all the details of their successions and "hopes." She broke off somewhat impatiently. "Good gracious, cousin," she said, "what are you thinking about?" "I am thinking," said the Bishop, "of something singular, which, if my memory is right, is in St. Augustine. Place your hopes in the man to whom it is impossible to succeed."

He displayed at times a gentle raillery, which nearly always contained a serious meaning. During one Lent a young vicar came to D—— and preached at the cathe-

**dral.** He was rather eloquent, and the subject of his sermon was charity. He invited the rich to give to the needy in order to escape hell, which he painted in the most frightful way he could, and reach paradise, which he made desirable and charming. There was among the congregation a rich retired merchant, somewhat of an usurer, who had acquired £80,000 by manufacturing coarse cloths, serges, and caddis. In his whole lifetime M. Géborand had never given alms to a beggar, but after this sermon it was remarked that he gave every Sunday a halfpenny to the old women begging at the cathedral gate. There were six of them to share it. One day the Bishop saw him bestowing his charity, and said to his sister with a smile, "Look at M. Géborand buying a halfpenny worth of paradise."

A Provençal by birth, he easily accustomed himself to all the dialects of the South: this greatly pleased the people, and had done no little in securing him admission to all minds. He was, as it were, at home in the hut and on the mountain. He could say the grandest things in the most vulgar idioms, and as he spoke all languages he entered all hearts. However, he was the same to people of fashion as to the lower classes.

He never condemned anything hastily or without taking the circumstances into calculation. He would say, Let us look at the road by which the fault has passed. Being, as he called himself with a smile, an ex-sinner, he had none of the intrenchments of rigorism, and professed loudly, and careless of the frowns of the unco good, a doctrine which might be summed up nearly as follows:—

"Man has upon him the flesh which is at once his burden and his temptation. He carries it with him and yields to it. He must watch, restrain, and repress it, and only obey it in the last extremity. In this obedience there may still be a fault; but the fault thus committed is venial. It is a fall, but a fall on the knees, which may end in prayer. To be a saint is the exception, to be a just man is the rule: Err, fail, sin, but

be just. The least possible amount of sin is the law of man : no sin at all is the dream of angels. All that is earthly is subjected to sin, for it is a gravitation."

When he saw everybody cry out and grow indignant, all of a sudden, he would say with a smile, "Oh ! oh, it seems as if this is a great crime which all the world is committing. Look at the startled hypocrites, hastening to protest and place themselves under cover."

He was indulgent to the women and the poor on whom the weight of human society presses. He would say, "The faults of women, children, servants, the weak, the indigent, and the ignorant are the fault of husbands, fathers, masters, the strong, the rich, and the learned." He also said, "Teach the ignorant as much as you possibly can : society is culpable for not giving instruction gratis, and is responsible for the night it produces. This soul is full of darkness, and sin is committed ; but the guilty person is not the man who commits the sin, but he who produces the darkness."

As we see, he had a strange manner, peculiarly his own, of judging things. I suspect that he obtained it from the Gospels. He one day heard in a drawing-room the story of a trial which was shortly to take place. A wretched man, through love of a woman and a child he had by her, having exhausted his resources, coined false money, which at that period was an offence punished by death. The woman was arrested while issuing the first false piece manufactured by the man. She was detained, but there was no proof against her. She alone could charge her lover and ruin him by confessing. She denied. They pressed her, but she adhered to her denial. Upon this, the Royal Procureur had an idea : he feigned infidelity on the lover's part, and contrived, by cleverly presenting the woman with fragments of letters, to persuade her that she had a rival, and that the man was deceiving her. Then, exasperated by jealousy, she denounced her lover, confessed everything, proved everything. The man was ruined, and would shortly be tried with his accomplice at Aix. The story was told, and



everybody was delighted at the magistrate's cleverness. By bringing jealousy into play he brought out the truth through passion, and obtained justice through revenge. The Bishop listened to all this in silence, and when it was ended he asked: "Where will this man and woman be tried?" "At the assizes." Then he continued, "And where will the Royal Procureur be tried?"

A tragical event occurred at D——. A man was condemned to death for murder. He was a wretched fellow, not exactly educated, not exactly ignorant, who had been a mountebank at fairs and a public writer. The trial attracted the attention of the towns-people. On the eve of the day fixed for the execution the prison chaplain was taken ill, and a priest was wanted to assist the sufferer in his last moments. The Curé was sent for, and it seems that he refused, saying, "It is no business of mine, I have nothing to do with the mountebank, I am ill too, and besides, that is not my place." This answer was carried to the Bishop, who said, "The Curé is right—it is not his place, it is mine." He went straight to the prison, entered the mountebank's cell, called him by name, took his hand, and spoke to him. He spent the whole day with him, forgetting sleep and food while praying to GOD for the soul of the condemned man. He told him the best truths, which are the most simple. He was father, brother, friend—bishop only to bless. He taught him everything, while reassuring and consoling him. This man was about to die in desperation: death was to him like an abyss, and he shuddered as he stood on its gloomy brink. He was not ignorant enough to be completely indifferent, and his condemnation, which was a profound shock, had here and there broken through that partition which separates us from the mystery of things, and which we call life. He peered incessantly out of this world through these crevices, and only saw darkness; but the Bishop showed him a light.

On the morrow, when they came to fetch the condemned man, the Bishop was with him. He followed

him and showed himself to the mob in his purple hood, and with the episcopal cross round his neck, side by side with this rope-bound wretch. He entered the cart with him, he mounted the scaffold with him. The sufferer, so gloomy and crushed on the previous day, was radiant ; he felt that his soul was reconciled, and he hoped for heaven. The Bishop embraced him, and at the moment when the knife was about to fall, said : " The man whom his fellow-men kill, God resuscitates. He whom his brothers expel finds the Father again. Pray, believe, enter into life ! The Father is there ! " When he descended from the scaffold there was something in his glance which made the people open a path for him ; it was impossible to say whether his pallor or his serenity were the more admirable. On returning to the humble abode which he called smilingly his palace, he said to his sister : " I have just been officiating pontifically."

As the most sublime things are often those least understood, there were persons in the town who said, in commenting on the Bishop's conduct, " It is affectation." This, however, was only the talk of drawing-rooms ; the people who do not regard holy actions maliciously were affected, and admired. As for the Bishop, the sight of the guillotine was a shock to him, and it was long ere he recovered from it.

M. Myriel might be called at any hour to the bedside of the sick and the dying. He was not ignorant that his greatest duty and greatest labour lay there. Widowed or orphaned families had no occasion to send for him, for he came of himself. He had the art of sitting down and holding his tongue for hours by the side of a man who had lost the wife he loved, or of a mother bereaved of her child. As he knew the time to be silent, he also knew the time to speak. What an admirable consoler he was ! he did not try to efface grief by oblivion, but to aggrandize and dignify it by hope. He would say, " Take care of the way in which you turn to the dead. Do not think of that which perishes. Look fixedly, and you will perceive the living light of your beloved

dead in heaven." He knew that belief is healthy, and he sought to counsel and calm the desperate man by pointing out to him the resigned man, and to transform the grief that gazes at a grave by showing it the grief that looks at a star.

## CHAPTER V.

### MONSEIGNEUR'S CASSOCKS LAST TOO LONG.

M. MYRIEL'S domestic life was full of the same thoughts as his public life. To any one capable of inspecting it closely, the voluntary poverty in which the Bishop lived would have been a solemn and charming spectacle. Like all old men, and like most thinkers, he slept little, but that short sleep was deep. In the morning he remained in contemplation for an hour, and then read mass either at the cathedral or in his house. Mass over, he breakfasted on rye bread dipped in the milk of his own cows. Then he set to work.

A bishop is a very busy man. He must daily receive the secretary to the bishopric, who is generally a canon, and nearly daily his grand vicars. He has congregations to control, permissions to grant, a whole ecclesiastical library to examine, in the shape of diocesan catechisms, books of hours, etc.; mandates to write, sermons to authorize, curés and mayors to reconcile, a clerical correspondence, an administrative correspondence, on one side the State, on the other the Holy See; in a word, a thousand tasks. The time which these thousand tasks, his offices, and his breviary left him, he gave first to the needy, the sick, and the afflicted; the time which the afflicted, the sick, and the needy left him he gave to work. Sometimes he hoed in his garden, at others he read and wrote. He had only one name for both sorts of labour; he called them gardening. "The mind is a garden," he would say.

Toward midday, when the weather was fine, he went out

and walked in the country or the town, frequently entering the cottages. He could be seen walking alone in deep thought, looking down, leaning on his long cane, dressed in his violet wadded and warm greatcoat, with his violet stockings thrust into clumsy shoes, and wearing his flat hat, through each corner of which were passed three golden acorns as tassels. It was a festival wherever he appeared, it seemed as if his passing had something ~~warm~~ <sup>ing</sup> and luminous about it; old men and children came to the door to greet the Bishop as they did the sun. He blessed them and they blessed him, and his house was pointed out to anybody who was in want of anything. Now and then he stopped, spoke to the little boys and girls, and smiled on their mothers. He visited the poor so long as he had any money; when he had none he visited the rich. As he made his cassocks last a long time, and he did not wish the fact to be noticed, he never went into town save in his wadded violet coat. This was rather tiresome in summer.

On returning home he dined. The dinner resembled the breakfast. At half-past eight in the evening he supped with his sister, Madame Magloire standing behind them and waiting on them. Nothing could be more frugal than this meal; but if the Bishop had a curé to supper, Madame Magloire would take advantage of it to serve Monseigneur with some excellent fish from the lake, or famous game from the mountain. Every curé was the excuse for a good meal, and the Bishop held his tongue. On other occasions his repast only consisted of vegetables boiled in water and soup made with oil. Hence it was said in the town; "When the Bishop does not fare like a curé, he fares like a trappist."

After supper he conversed for half an hour with Mlle. Baptistine and Madame Magloire; then he returned to his room and began writing again, either on loose leaves or on the margin of some folio. He was well read, and a bit of a *savant*, and has left five or six curious MSS. on theological subjects. In one of these dissertations he examines the works of Hugo, Bishop of Ptolemais, great-grand-

uncle of him who writes this book, and he proves that to this bishop must be attributed the various opuscles published in the last century under the pseudonym of Barley-court. At times, in the midst of his reading, no matter the book he held in his hands, he would suddenly fall into a deep meditation, from which he only emerged to write a few lines on the pages of the book. These lines have frequently no connection with the book that contains them. We have before us a note written by him on the margin of a quarto entitled, "Correspondence of Lord Germain with Generals Clinton and Cornwallis, and the Admirals of the American station. Versailles, Prinçot; and Paris, Pissot, Quai des Augustins." Here is the note.

"Oh you who are! Ecclesiastes calls you Omnipotence; the Maccabees call you Creator; the Epistle to the Ephesians calls you liberty; Baruch calls you Immensity; the Psalms call you Wisdom and Truth; St. John calls you Light; the Book of Kings calls you Lord; Exodus calls you Providence; Leviticus, Holiness; Esdras, Justice; Creation calls you God; man calls you the Father; but Solomon calls you Mercy, and that is the fairest of all your names."

About nine o'clock the two females withdrew and went up to their bedrooms on the first floor, leaving him alone till morning on the ground floor. Here it is necessary that we should give an exact idea of the Bishop's residence.

---

## CHAPTER VI.

### BY WHOM THE HOUSE WAS GUARDED.

THE house the Bishop resided in consisted, as we have said, of a ground floor and one above it, three rooms on the ground, three bedrooms on the first floor, and above them a storeroom. Behind the house was a quarter of an acre of garden. The two females occupied the first floor, and the Bishop lodged below. The first room, which

opened on the street, served him as dining-room, the second as bedroom, the third as oratory. You could not get out of the oratory without passing through the bedroom, or out of the bedroom without passing through the sitting-room. At the end of the oratory was a closed alcove with a bed, for any one who stayed the night, and the Bishop offered this bed to country curés whom business or the calls of their parish brought to D——.

The hospital surgery, a small building added to the house and built on a part of the garden, had been transformed into kitchen and cellar. There was also in the garden a stable, which had been the old hospital kitchen, and in which the Bishop kept two cows. Whatever the quantity of milk they yielded, he invariably sent one half every morning to the hospital patients. "I am paying my tithes," he was wont to say.

His room was rather spacious, and very difficult to heat in the cold weather. As wood is excessively dear at D——, he hit on the idea of partitioning off with planks a portion of the cow-house. Here he spent his evenings during the great frosts, and called it his "winter drawing-room." In this room, as in the dining-room, there was no other furniture but a square deal table and four straw chairs. The dining-room was also adorned with an old buffet stained to imitate rosewood. The Bishop had made the altar which decorated his oratory out of a similar buffet, suitably covered with white cloths and imitation lace. His rich penitents and the religious ladies of D—— had often subscribed to pay for a handsome new altar for Monseigneur's oratory; each time he took the money and gave it to the poor. "The finest of all altars," he would say, "is the soul of an unhappy man who is consoled and thanks God."

There were in his oratory two straw priedieus, and an arm-chair, also of straw, in his bedroom. When he by chance received seven or eight persons at the same time, the Prefect, the General, the staff of the regiment quartered in the town, or some pupils of the Lower Seminary,

it was necessary to fetch the chairs from the winter drawing-room, the priedieus from the oratory, and the easy chair from the bedroom; in this way as many as eleven seats could be collected for the visitors. At each new visit a room was unfurnished. It happened at times that there would be twelve; in such a case the Bishop concealed the embarrassing nature of the situation by ~~standing~~ before the chimney if it were winter, or walking up and down the room were it summer.

There was also another chair in the alcove, but it was half robbed of the straw, and had only three legs to stand on, so that it could only be used when resting against a wall. Mlle. Baptistine also had in her bedroom a very large settee of wood, which had once been gilt and covered with flowered chintz, but it had been necessary to raise this settee to the first floor through the window, owing to the narrowness of the stairs; and hence it could not be reckoned on in any emergency. It had been Mlle. Baptistine's ambition to buy drawing-room furniture of mahogany and covered with yellow Utrecht velvet, but this would have cost at least 500 francs, and seeing that she had only succeeded in saving for this object 42 francs 5 sous in five years, she gave up the idea. Besides, who is there that ever attains his ideal?

Nothing more simple can be imagined than the Bishop's bedroom. A long window opening on the garden; opposite the bed, an iron hospital bed with a canopy of green serge; in the shadow of the bed, behind a curtain, toilet articles, still revealing the old elegant habits of the man of fashion; two doors, one near the chimney leading to the oratory, the other near the library leading to the dining-room. The library was a large glass-case full of books; the chimney of wood, painted to imitate marble, was habitually fireless; in the chimney were a pair of iron andirons ornamented with two vases, displaying garlands and grooves which had once been silvered, which was a species of episcopal luxury; over the chimney a crucifix of unsilvered copper fastened to threadbare black velvet, in a frame which had lost its gilding; near the window

was a large table with an inkstand, loaded with irregularly arranged papers and heavy tomes ; before the table the straw arm-chair ; in front of the bed a priedieu borrowed from the oratory.

Two portraits, in oval frames, hung on the wall on either side of the bed. Small gilded inscriptions on the neutral tinted ground of the canvas by the side of the figures indicated that the portraits represented, one the Abbé de Chaliot, Bishop of St. Claude ; the other the Abbé Tourteau, Vicar-general of Agde, and Abbé of Grand Champs, belonging to the Cistercian order in the diocese of Chartres. The Bishop, on succeeding to the hospital infirmary, found the pictures there and left them. They were priests, probably donors—two motives for him to respect them. All he knew of the two personages was that they had been nominated by the King, the one to his bishopric, the other to his benefice, on the same day, April 27, 1785. Madame Magloire having unhooked the portraits to remove the dust, the Bishop found this circumstance recorded in faded ink on a small square of paper which time had turned yellow, and fastened by four wafers behind the portrait of the Abbé of Grand Champs.

He had at his window an antique curtain of heavy woollen stuff, which had grown so old that Madame Magloire, in order to avoid the expense of a new one, was obliged to make a large seam in the very middle of it. The seam formed a cross, and the Bishop often drew attention to it. "How pleasant that is," he would say. All the rooms in the house, ground floor and first floor, were whitewashed, which is a barrack and hospital fashion. Still, some years later, Madame Magloire discovered, as we shall see further on, paintings under the whitewashed paper, in Mlle. Baptistine's bedroom. The rooms were paved with red bricks which were washed every week, and there were straw mats in front of all the beds. This house, moreover, managed by two females, was exquisitely clean from top to bottom : this was the only luxury the Bishop allowed himself, for, as he said, "It takes nothing from



the poor." We must allow, however, that of the old property there still remained six silver spoons and forks and a soup ladle, which Madame Magloire daily saw with delight shining splendidly on the coarse tablecloth. And as we are here depicting the Bishop of D—— as he was, we must add that he had said, more than once, "I do not think I could give up eating with silver." To this plate must be added two heavy candlesticks of massive silver, which the Bishop inherited from a great-aunt. These branched candlesticks each held two wax candles, and usually figured on the Bishop's chimney. When he had any one to dinner Madame Magloire lit the candles and placed the two candlesticks on the table. There was in the Bishop's bedroom, at the head of his bed, a small cupboard in the wall, in which Madame Magloire each night placed the plate and the large ladle; I am bound to add that the key was never taken out.

The garden, spoiled to some extent by the ugly buildings to which we have referred, was composed of four walks, radiating round a cesspool; another walk ran all round the garden close to the surrounding white wall. Between these walks were four box-bordered squares. In three of them Madame Magloire grew vegetables; in the fourth the Bishop had placed flowers; here and there were a few fruit trees. Once Madame Magloire had said, with a sort of gentle malice, "Monseigneur, although you turn everything to use, here is an unemployed plot. It would be better to have lettuces there than bouquets." "Madame Magloire," the Bishop answered, "you are mistaken: the beautiful is as useful as the useful." He added, after a moment's silence, "More so, perhaps."

This square, composed of three or four borders, occupied the Bishop almost as much as his books did. He liked to spend an hour or two there, cutting, raking, and digging holes in which he placed seeds. He was not so hostile to insects as a gardener would have liked. However, he made no pretensions to botany; he was ignorant of groups and solidism; he did not make the slightest attempt to decide between Tournefort and the natur

method ; he was not a partisan either of Jussieu or Linnaeus. He did not study plants, but he loved flowers. He greatly respected the professors, but he respected the ignorant even more, and without ever failing in this respect, he watered his borders every summer evening with a green-painted tin pot.

The house had not a single door that locked. The door of the dining-room, which, as we said, opened right on the cathedral square, had formerly been adorned with bolts and locks like a prison gate. The Bishop had all this iron removed, and the door was only hasped either night or day : the first passer-by, no matter the hour, had only to push it. At the outset the two females had been greatly alarmed by this never-closed door ; but the Bishop said to them, " Have bolts placed on the doors of your rooms if you like." In the end they shared his confidence, or at least affected to do so : Madame Magloire alone was from time to time alarmed. As regards the Bishop, his idea is explained, or at least indicated, by these three lines, which he wrote on the margin of a Bible : " This is the distinction : the physician's doors must never be closed, the priest's door must always be open." On another book, entitled " Philosophy of Medical Science," he wrote this other note : " Am I not a physician like them ? I also have my patients : in the first place, I have theirs, whom they call the sick ; and then I have my own, whom I call the unhappy." Elsewhere he also wrote : " Do not ask the name of the man who seeks a bed from you, for it is before all the man whom his name embarrasses that needs an asylum."

It came about that a worthy curé—I forget whether it were he of Couloubroux or he of Pompierry—thought proper to ask him one day, probably at the instigation of Madame Magloire, whether Monseigneur was quite certain that he was not acting to some extent imprudently by leaving his door open day and night for any who liked to enter, and if he did not fear lest some misfortune might happen in a house so poorly guarded. The Bishop tapped his shoulder with gentle gravity, and said to him,

"Nisi Dominus custodierit domum, in vanum vigilant qui custodiunt eam."

Then he spoke of something else. He was fond of saying too, "There is the Priest's bravery as well as that of the Colonel of Dragoons. The only thing is that ours must be quiet."

## CHAPTER VII.

### CRAVATTE.

HERE naturally comes a fact which we must not omit, for it is one of those which will enable us to see what manner of man the Bishop of D—— was. After the destruction of the band of Gaspard Bès, which had infested the gorges of Ollioules, Cravatte, one of his lieutenants, took refuge in the mountains. He concealed himself for a while with his brigands, the remnant of Bès's band, in the county of Nice, then went to Piedmont, and suddenly reappeared in France, viâ Barcelonnette. He was seen first at Jauziers, and next at Tuiles; he concealed himself in the caverns of the Joug de l'Aigle, and descended thence on the hamlets and villages by the ravines of the Ubaye. He pushed on even as far as Embrun, entered the church one night and plundered the sacristy. His brigandage desolated the country, and the gendarmes were in vain placed on his track. He constantly escaped, and at times even offered resistance, for he was a bold scoundrel. In the midst of all this terror the Bishop arrived on his visitation, and the Mayor came to him and urged him to turn back. Cravatte held the mountain as far as Arche and beyond, and there was danger, even with an escort. It would be uselessly exposing three or four unhappy gendarmes.

"For that reason," said the Bishop, "I intend to go without escort."

"Can you mean it, Monseigneur?" the Mayor exclaimed.

"I mean it so fully that I absolutely refuse gendarmes and intend to start in an hour."

"Monseigneur, you will not do that!"

"There is in the mountain," the Bishop continued, "a humble little parish, which I have not visited for three years. They are good friends of mine, and quiet and honest shepherds. They are the owners of one goat out of every thirty they guard; they make very pretty woollen ropes of different colours, and they play mountain airs on small six-holed flutes. They want to hear about heaven every now and then, and what would they think of a bishop who was afraid? What would they say if I did not go?"

"But, Monseigneur, the brigands."

"Ah," said the Bishop, "you are right; I may meet them. They too must want to hear about heaven."

"Monseigneur, they will plunder you."

"I have nothing."

"They will kill you."

"A poor old priest who passes by, muttering his mummery? Nonsense, what good would that do them?"

"Oh, good gracious, if you were to meet them!"

"I would ask them for alms for my poor."

"Monseigneur, do not go. In Heaven's name do not, for you expose your life."

"My good sir," said the Bishop, "is that all? I am not in this world to save my life, but to save souls."

There was no help for it, and he set out only accompanied by a lad, who offered to act as his guide. His obstinacy created a sensation in the country, and caused considerable alarm. He would not take either his sister or Madame Magloire with him. He crossed the mountain on mule back, met nobody, and reached his good friends the goat-herds safe and sound. He remained with them a fortnight, preaching, administering the sacraments, teaching and moralizing. When he was ready to start for home, he resolved to sing a *Te Deum* pontifically, and spoke about it to the Curé. But what was to be done? there were no episcopal ornaments. All that

could be placed at his disposal was a poor village sacristy, with a few old faded and pinchbeck covered chasubles.

"Nonsense," said the Bishop; "announce the Te Deum in your sermon for all that. It will come right in the end."

Inquiries were made in the surrounding churches; but all the magnificence of these united humble parishes would ~~not~~ have been sufficient decently to equip a cathedral chorister. While they were in this embarrassment a large chest was brought and left at the curacy for the Bishop by two strange horsemen, who started again at once. The chest was opened, and found to contain a cope of cloth of gold, a mitre adorned with diamonds, an archiepiscopal cross, a magnificent crozier, and all the pontifical robes stolen a month back from the treasury of our Lady of Embrun. In the chest was a paper on which were written these words: "Cravatte to Monseigneur Welcome."

"Did I not tell you that it would be all right?" the Bishop said; then he added with a smile, "Heaven sends an archbishop's cope to a man who is contented with a curé's surplice."

"Monseigneur," the curé muttered, with a gentle shake of his head, "Heaven or——"

The Bishop looked fixedly at the Curé and repeated authoritatively. "Heaven!"

When he returned to Chastelon, and all along the road, he was regarded curiously. He found at the Presbytery of that town Mlle. Baptistine and Madame Magloire waiting for him, and he said to his sister, "Well, was I right? The poor priest went among these poor mountaineers with empty hands, and returns with his hands full. I started only taking with me my confidence in Heaven, and I bring back the treasures of a cathedral."

Events, however, were rare in his existence. We relate those we know, but ordinarily he spent his life in always doing the same things at the same moment. A month of his year resembled an hour of his day. As to what became of the treasure of Embrun Cathedral, we should be greatly embarrassed if questioned on that head. There

were many fine things, very tempting and famous to steal on behalf of the poor. Stolen they were already, one moiety of the adventure was accomplished; the only thing left to do was to change the direction of the robbery, and make it turn slightly towards the poor. Still, we affirm nothing on the subject; we merely mention that among the Bishop's papers a rather obscure note was found, which probably refers to this question, and was thus conceived: "The question is to know whether it ought to go to the cathedral or the hospital."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PHILOSOPHY AFTER DRINKING.

THERE was a Senator, a skilful man, who had made his way with a rectitude that paid no attention to all those things which constitute obstacles, and are called conscience, plighted word, right, and duty: he had gone straight to his object without once swerving from the line of his promotions and his interest. He was an ex-procureur, softened by success, anything but a wicked man, doing all the little services in his power for his sons, his sons-in-law, his relatives, and even his friends; he had selected the best opportunities, and the rest seemed to him something absurd. He was witty, and just sufficiently lettered to believe himself a disciple of Epicurus, while probably only a product of Pigault Lebrun. He was fond of laughing pleasantly at things infinite and eternal, and at the crotchets "of our worthy Bishop." He even laughed at them with amiable authority in M. Myriel's presence. On some semi-official occasion the Count —— (this Senator) and M. Myriel met at the Prefect's table. At the dessert the Senator, who was merry but quite sober, said,—

"Come, Bishop, let us have a chat. A senator and a bishop can hardly meet without winking at each other

for we are two augurs, and I am about to make a confession to you. I have my system of philosophy."

"And you are right," the Bishop answered; "as you make your philosophy, so you must lie on it. You are on the bed of purple."

The Senator, thus encouraged, continued,—“Let us be candid.”

“Decidedly.”

“I declare to you,” the Senator went on, “that the Marquis d’Argens, Pyrrho, Hobbes, and Naigeon are no impostors. I have in my library all my philosophers with gilt backs.”

“Like yourself, Count,” the Bishop interrupted him.

The Senator proceeded,—

“I hate Diderot; he is an ideologist, a declaimer, and a revolutionist, believing in his heart in Deity, and more bigoted than Voltaire. The latter ridiculed Needham, and was wrong, for Needham’s eels prove that God is unnecessary. A drop of vinegar in a spoonful of flour supplies the *fiat lux*: suppose the drop larger, and the spoonful bigger, and you have the world. Man is the eel; then, of what use is the Eternal Father? My dear Bishop, the Jehovah hypothesis wearies me; it is only fitted to produce thin people who think hollow. Down with the great All which annoys me! Long live Zero, who leaves me at peace! Between ourselves, and in order to confess to my pastor, as is right and proper, I confess to you that I possess common sense. I am not wild about your Saviour, who continually preaches abnegation and sacrifice. It is advice offered by a miser to beggars. Abnegation, why? Sacrifice, for what object? I do not see that one wolf sacrifices itself to cause the happiness of another wolf. Let us, therefore, remain in nature. We are at the summit, so let us have the supreme philosophy. What is the use of being at the top, if you cannot see further than the end of other people’s noses? Let us live gaily, for life is all in all. As for man having a future elsewhere, up there, down there, somewhere, I do not believe a syllable of it. Oh yes! I recommend sacri-

fices and abnegation to me. I must take care of all I do. I must rack my brains about good and evil, justice and injustice, *fas et nefas*. Why so? because I shall have to give account for my actions. When? after my death. What a fine dream! after death! He will be a clever fellow who catches me. Just think of a lump of ashes seized by a shadowy hand. Let us speak the truth, we who are initiated and have raised the skirt of Isis; there is no good, no evil, but there is vegetation. Let us seek reality and go to the bottom; hang it all, we must scent the truth, dig into the ground for it and seize it. Then it offers you exquisite delights; then you become strong and laugh. I am square at the base, my dear Bishop, and human immortality is a thing which anybody who likes may listen to. Oh, what a charming prospect! What a fine billet Adam has! You are a soul, you will be an angel, and have blue wings on your shoulder-blades. Come, help me, is it not Tertullian who says that the blessed will go from one planet to the other? Very good; they will be the grasshoppers of the planets. And then they will see God; Ta, ta, ta. These paradises are all nonsense, and GOD is a monstrous fable. I would not say so in the *Moniteur*, of course, but I whisper it between friends, *inter pocula*. Sacrificing the earth for paradise is giving up the substance for the shadow. I am not such an ass as to be the dupe of the Infinite. I am nothing, my name is Count Nothing, Senator. Did I exist before my birth? no; shall I exist after my death? no. What am I? a little dust aggregated by an organism. What have I to do on this earth? I have the choice between suffering and enjoyment. To what will suffering lead me? to nothingness, but I shall have suffered. To what will enjoyment lead me? to nothingness, but I shall have enjoyed. My choice is made; a man must either eat or be eaten, and so I eat, for it is better to be the tooth than the grass. That is my wisdom; after which go on as I impel you; the grave-digger is there, the Pantheon for such as us, and all fall into the large hole. *Finis*, and total liquidation, that is the vanishing point. Death



is dead, take my word for it ; and I laugh at the idea of any one present affirming the contrary. It is an invention of nurses, old Boguey for children, Jehovah for men. No, our morrow is night ; behind the tomb there is nothing but equal nothings. You may have been Sardanapalus, you may have been St. Vincent de Paul, but it all comes to the same thing. That is the truth, so live above all else ; make use of your *me*, so long as you hold it. In truth, I tell you, my dear Bishop, I have my philosophy, and I have my philosophers, and I do not let myself be deluded by fables. After all, something must be offered persons who are down in the world—the bare-footed, the strugglers for existence, and the wretched ; and so they are offered pure legends—chimeras—the soul—immortality—paradise—the stars—to swallow. They chew that and put it on their dry bread. The man who has nothing has God, and that is something at any rate. I do not oppose it, but I keep M. Naigeon for myself ; God is good for the plebs."

The Bishop clapped his hands.

"That is what I call speaking," he exclaimed. "Ah, what an excellent and truly wonderful thing this materialism is ! it is not every man who wishes that can have it. Ah ! when a man has reached that point, he is no longer a dupe ; he does not let himself be stupidly exiled, like Cato ; or stoned, like St. Stephen ; or burnt, like Joan of Arc. Those who have succeeded in acquiring this materialism have the joy of feeling themselves irresponsible, and thinking that they can devour everything without anxiety, places, sinecures, power well or badly gained, dignities, lucrative tergiversations, useful treachery, folly, capitulations with their consciences, and that they will go down to the tomb after digesting it all properly. How agreeable this is ! I am not referring to you, my dear Senator, still I cannot refrain from congratulating you. You great gentlemen have, as you say, a philosophy of your own, and for yourselves, exquisite, refined, accessible to the rich alone, good with any sauce, and admirably seasoning the joys of life. This philosophy

is drawn from the profundities, and dug up by special searchers. But you are kind fellows, and think it no harm that belief in GOD should be the philosophy of the populace, much in the same way as a goose stuffed with chestnuts is the truffled turkey of the poor."

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE BISHOP FACES A NEW LIGHT.

ONCE the Bishop did a thing which the whole town declared to be even more venturesome than his trip in the mountains among the bandits. A man lived alone in the country near D——: this man, let us out with the great word at once, was an ex-Conventionalist, of the name of G——. People talked about him in the little world of D—— with a species of horror. A Conventionalist, only think of that! Those men existed at the time when people "thou-ed" one another and were called citizens. This man was almost a monster: he had not voted for the King's death, but had done all but that, and was a quasi-regicide. How was it that this man had not been tried by court-martial, on the return of the legitimate princes? They need not have cut his head off, for clemency is all right and proper, but banishment for life would have been an example, and so on. Moreover, he was an atheist, like all those men. It was the gossip of geese round a vulture!

And was this G—— a vulture? Yes, if he might be judged by his ferocious solitude. As he had not voted the King's death, he was not comprised in the decree of exile, and was enabled to remain in France. He lived about three miles from the town, far from every village, every road, in a nook of a very wild valley. He had there, so it was said, a field, a hut, a den. He had no neighbours, not even passers-by; since he had lived in the valley the path leading to it had become overgrown with grass. People talked of the spot as of the hangman's

house. Yet the Bishop thought of it, and from time to time gazed at a spot on the horizon where a clump of trees pointed out the old Conventionalist's valley, and said, "There is a soul there alone," and he added to himself, "I owe him a visit."

But, let us confess it, this idea, which at the first blush was natural, seemed to him after a moment's reflection strange and impossible, almost repulsive. For, in his heart, he shared the general impression, and the Conventionalist inspired him, without his being able to account for it, with that feeling which is the border line of hatred, and which is so well expressed by the word estrangement.

Still the shepherd ought not to keep aloof from a scabby sheep; but then what a sheep it was! The good Bishop was perplexed; at times he started in that direction, but turned back. One day a rumour spread in the town that a young boy who waited on G—— in his den had come to fetch a doctor: the old villain was dying, paralysis was overpowering him, and he could not last out the night. Happy release! some added.

The Bishop took his stick, put on his overcoat to hide his well-worn cassock, as well as to protect him against the night breeze which would soon rise, and set out. The sun had almost attained the horizon when the Bishop reached the excommunicated spot. He perceived with a certain heart-beating that he was close to the wild beast's den. He strode across a ditch, clambered over a hedge, entered a neglected garden, and suddenly perceived the cavern behind some shrubs. It was a low, poor-looking hut, small and clean, with a vine nailed over the front.

In front of the door an old white-haired man, seated in a worn-out wheel chair, was smiling in the sun. By his side stood a boy, who handed him a pot of milk. While the Bishop was looking at him the old man uplifted his voice. "Thanks," he said, "I want nothing further," and his smile was turned from the sun to rest on the boy.

The Bishop stepped forward, and at the noise of his footsteps the seated man turned his head, and his face

expressed all the surprise it is possible to feel after a long life.

"Since I have lived here," he said, "you are the first person who has come to me. Who may you be, sir?"

The Bishop answered, "My name is Bienvenu Myriel."

"I have heard that name uttered. Are you not he whom the peasants call Monseigneur Welcome?"

"I am."

The old man continued, with a half smile, "In that case you are my Bishop?"

"Yes, a little."

"Come in, sir."

The Conventionalist offered his hand to the Bishop, but the Bishop did not take it—he confined himself to saying,—

"I am pleased to see that I was deceived. You certainly do not look ill."

"I am about to be cured, sir," the old man said; then after a pause he added, "I shall be dead in three hours. I am a bit of a physician, and know in what way the last hour comes. Yesterday only my feet were cold; to-day the chill reached my knees; now I can feel it ascending to my waist, and when it reaches the heart I shall stop. The sun is glorious, is it not? I had myself wheeled out in order to take a farewell glance at things. You can talk to me, for it does not weary me. You have done well to come and look at a dying man, for it is proper that there should be witnesses. People have their fancies, and I should have liked to go on till dawn. But I know that I can hardly last three hours. It will be night, but, after all, what matter? Finishing is a simple affair, and daylight is not necessary for it. Be it so, I will die by starlight."

Then he turned to the lad:

"Go to bed. You sat up the other night, and must be tired."

The boy went into the cabin; the old man looked after him, and added, as if speaking to himself,—

"While he is sleeping I shall die; the two slumbers can keep each other company."

The Bishop was not so moved as we might imagine he would be. He did not think that he saw GOD in this way of dying ; and—let us out with it, as the small contradictions of great hearts must also be indicated—he, who at times laughed so heartily at his grandeur, was somewhat annoyed at not being called Monseigneur, and was almost tempted to reply, Citizen. He felt an inclination for coarse familiarity, common enough with doctors and priests, but to which he was not accustomed. This man after all, this Conventionalist, this representative of the people, had been a mighty one of the earth : for the first time in his life, perhaps, the Bishop felt disposed to sternness.

The Republican, in the meanwhile, regarded him with modest cordiality, in which, perhaps, could be traced that humility which is so becoming in a man who is on the point of returning to the dust. The Bishop, on his side, though he generally guarded against curiosity, which according to him was akin to insult, could not refrain from examining the Conventionalist with an attention which, as it did not emanate from sympathy, would have pricked his conscience in the case of any other man. The Conventionalist produced the effect upon him of being beyond the pale of the law, even the law of charity.

The Bishop sat down on a stone and began rather abruptly.

“ I congratulate you,” he said, in a tone people employ to reprimand ; “ *at least* you did not vote the King’s death.”

The Republican did not seem to notice the covert bitterness of this remark, *at least* ; he replied, without a smile on his face,—

“ Do not congratulate me, sir : I voted the death of the tyrant.” It was the accent of austerity opposed to that of sternness.

“ What do you mean ? ” the Bishop continued.

“ I mean that man has a tyrant, Ignorance, and I voted for the end of that tyrant which engendered royalty, which is the false authority. while knowledge is the

true authority. Man must only be governed by knowledge."

"And by his conscience," the Bishop added.

"That is the same thing. Conscience is the amount of innate knowledge we have in us."

Monseigneur Welcome listened in some surprise to this language, which was very novel to him. The Republican continued,—

"As for Louis XVI. I said 'No. I do not believe that I have the right to kill a man, but I feel the duty of exterminating a tyrant, and I voted for the end of the tyrant. That is to say, for the end of prostitution for women; the end of slavery for men; and the end of night for children. In voting for the Republic I voted for all this: I voted for fraternity, concord, the Dawn! I aided in the overthrow of errors and prejudices, and such an overthrow produces light; we hurled down the old world, and that vase of wretchedness, by being poured over the human race, became an urn of joy."

"Mingled joy," said the Bishop.

"You might call it a troubled joy, and now, after that fatal return of the past which is called 1814, a departed joy. Alas! the work was incomplete, I grant; we demolished the ancient régime in facts, but were not able to suppress it completely in ideas. It is not sufficient to destroy abuses, but morals must also be modified. Though the mill no longer exists, the wind still blows."

"You demolished: it may be useful, but I distrust a demolition complicated with passion."

"Right has its passion, Sir Bishop, and that passion is an element of progress. No matter what may be said, the French Revolution is the most powerful step taken by the human race since the advent of Christ. It may be incomplete, but it was sublime. It softened minds, it calmed, appeased, and enlightened, and it spread civilization over the world. The French Revolution was good, for it was the consecration of humanity."

The Bishop could not refrain from muttering,—

"Yes? '93!"

The Republican drew himself up with almost mournful solemnity, and shouted, as well as a dying man could shout,—

"Ah! there we have it! I have been waiting for that. A cloud had been collecting for fifteen hundred years, and at the end of that period it burst: you are condemning the thunder-clap."

The Bishop, without perhaps confessing it to himself, felt that the blow had gone home; still he kept a good countenance, and answered,—

"The judge speaks in the name of justice; the priest speaks in that of pity, which is only a higher form of justice. A thunder-clap must not deceive itself."

And he added as he looked fixedly at the Conventionalist,—

"And Louis XVII.?"

The Republican stretched forth his hand and seized the Bishop's arm.

"Louis XVII. Let us consider. Whom do you weep for? Is it the innocent child? in that case I weep with you. Is it the royal child? in that case I must ask leave to reflect. For me, the thought of the brother of Cartouche, an innocent lad, hung up under the armpits in the Place de Grève until death ensued, for the sole crime of being Cartouche's brother, is not less painful than the grandson of Louis XV., the innocent boy martyred in the Temple Tower for the sole crime of being the grandson of Louis XV."

"I do not like such an association of names, sir," said the Bishop.

"Louis XV.? Cartouche? On behalf of which do you protest?"

There was a moment's silence; the Bishop almost regretted having come, and yet felt himself vaguely and strangely shaken. The Conventionalist continued,—

"Ah! Sir Priest, you do not like the crudities of truth, but Christ loved them; He took a scourge and swept the temple. His lightning lash was a rough discourses of truths. When He exclaimed, 'Suffer little children to

come unto Me,' He made no distinction among them. He made no difference between the dauphin of Barabbas and the dauphin of Herod. Innocence is its own crown, and does not require to be a Highness; it is as august in rags as when crowned with *fleurs-de-lis*."

"That is true," said the Bishop in a low voice. •

"You have named Louis XVII.," the Conventionalist continued; "let us understand each other. Shall we weep for all the innocents, martyrs, and children of the lowest as of the highest rank? I am with you there, but as I said, in that case we must go back beyond '93, and begin our tears before Louis XVII. I will weep over the children of the kings with you, provided that you weep with me over the children of the people."

"I weep for all," said the Bishop.

"Equally!" G—— exclaimed; "and if the balance must be uneven, let it be on the side of the people, as they have suffered the longest."

There was again a silence, which the Republican broke. He rose on his elbow, held his chin with his thumb and forefinger, as a man does mechanically when he is interrogating and judging, and fixed on the Bishop a glance full of all the energy of approaching death. It was almost an explosion.

"Yes, sir; the people have suffered for a long time. But let me ask why you have come to question and speak to me about Louis XVII.? I do not know you. Ever since I have been in this country I have lived here alone, never setting my foot across the threshold, and seeing no one but the boy who attends to me. Your name, it is true, has vaguely reached me, and I am bound to say that it was pronounced affectionately; but that means nothing, for clever people have so many ways of making the worthy, simple folk believe in them. By-the-bye, I did not hear the sound of your coach; you doubtless left it down there behind that clump of trees at the cross roads. I do not know you, I tell you; you have informed me that you are the Bishop, but that teaches me nothing as to your moral character. In a word—I repeat my question, Who



are you ? You are a bishop, that is to say, a prince of the Church, one of those gilded, escutcheoned annuitants who have ~~fat~~ prebends—the bishopric of D——, with 15,000 francs certain, 10,000 francs casually, or a total of 25,000 francs—who have kitchens, liveries, keep a good stable, and eat water-fowl on a Friday ; who go about, with lacqueys before and behind, in a gilded coach, in the name of the Saviour who walked barefoot ! You are a prelate ; you have, like all the rest, income, palace, horses, valets, a good table, and like all the rest you enjoy them ! that is all very well, but it says either too much or too little ; it does not enlighten me as to your intrinsic and essential value when you come with the probable intention of bringing me wisdom. To whom am I speaking—who are you ? ”

The Bishop bowed his head, and answered, “ I am a worm.”

“ A worm in a carriage ! ” the Republican growled.

It was his turn to be haughty, the Bishop’s to be humble ; the latter continued gently,—

“ Be it so, sir. But explain to me how my coach, which is a little way off behind the trees, my good table, and the water-fowl I eat on Friday, my palace, my income, and my footmen, prove that pity is not a virtue, that clemency is not a duty, and that ’93 was not inexorable.”

The Republican passed his hand over his forehead, as if to remove a cloud.

“ Before answering you,” he said, “ I must ask you to forgive me. I was in the wrong, sir, for you are in my house and my guest. You discuss my ideas, and I must restrict myself to combating your reasoning. Your wealth and enjoyments are advantages which I have over you in the debate, but courtesy bids me not employ them. I promise not to do so again.”

“ I thank you,” said the Bishop.

G—— continued : “ Let us return to the explanation you asked of me. Where were we ? What was it you said, that ’93 was inexorable ? ”

“ Yes, inexorable,” the Bishop said ; “ what do you

think of Marat clapping his hands at the guillotine ? ”

“ What do you think of Bossuet singing a *Té Deum* over the Dragonnades ? ”

The response was harsh, but went to its mark with the rigidity of a Minié bullet. The Bishop started, and could not parry it, but he was hurt by this way of mentioning Bossuet. The best minds have their fetishes, and at times feel vaguely wounded by any want of respect on the part of logic. The Conventionalist was beginning to gasp ; that asthma which is mingled with the last breath affected his voice ; still he retained perfect lucidity in his eyes. He continued,—

“ Let us say a few words more on this head. Beyond the Revolution, which, taken in its entirety, is an immense human affirmation, '93, alas, is a reply. You consider it inexorable, but what was the whole monarchy ? Carrier is a bandit, but what name do you give Montrevél ? Fouquier Tinville is a scoundrel, but what is your opinion about Lamoignon-Bâville ? Maillard is frightful, but what of Saulx-Tavannes, if you please ? Father Duchene is ferocious, but what epithet will you allow me for Père Letellier ? Jourdan Coupe-Tête is a monster, but less so than the Marquis de Louvois. I pity Marie Antoinette, Archduchess and Queen, but I also pity the poor Huguenot woman, who, in 1685, while suckling her child, was fastened, naked to the waist, to a stake, while her infant was held at a distance. Her breast was swollen with milk, her heart with agony ; the babe, hungry and pale, saw that breast and screamed for it, and the hangman said to the wife, mother, and nurse, ‘ Abjure ! ’ giving her the choice between the death of her infant and the death of her conscience. What do you say of this punishment of Tantalus adapted to a woman ? Remember this carefully, sir, the French Revolution had its reasons, and its wrath will be absolved by the future. Its result is a better world ; and a caress for the human race issues from its most terrible blows. I must stop, for the game is all in my favour—besides, I am dying.”

And ceasing to regard the Bishop, the Republican finished his thought with the following few calm words,—

“ Yes, the brutalities of progress are called revolutions, but when they are ended, this fact is recognized ; the human race has been chastised, but it has moved on-wards.”

The Republican did not suspect that he had carried in turn every one of the Bishop’s internal intrenchments. One still remained, however, and from this, the last resource of Monseigneur’s resistance, came this remark, in which all the roughness of the commencement was perceptible,—

“ Progress must believe in GOD, and the good cannot have impious servants. A man who is an atheist is a bad guide for the human race.”

The ex-representative of the people did not reply. He trembled, looked up to the sky, and a tear slowly collected in his eye. When the lid was full the tear ran down his livid cheek, and he said in a low, shaking voice, as if speaking to himself,—

“ Oh thou ! oh ideal ! thou alone existeth ! ”

The Bishop had a sort of inexpressible commotion ; after a silence the old man raised a finger to heaven and said,—

“ The infinite is. It is there. If the infinite had not a me, the I would be its limit ; it would not be infinite ; in other words, it would not be. But it is. Hence it has a me. This I of the infinite is GOD.”

The dying man uttered these words in a loud voice, and with a shudder of ecstasy, as if he saw some one. When he had spoken his eyes closed, for the effort had exhausted him. It was evident that he had lived in one minute the few hours left him. The supreme moment was at hand. The Bishop understood it ; he had come here as a priest, and had gradually passed from extreme coldness to extreme emotion ; he looked at these closed eyes, he took this wrinkled and chilly hand and bent down over the dying man.

"This hour is God's. Would you not consider it matter of regret if we had met in vain?"

The Republican opened his eyes again; a gravity which suggested the shadow of death was imprinted on his countenance.

"Sir Bishop," he said, with a slowness produced perhaps more by the dignity of the scul than by failing of his strength, "I have spent my life in meditation, contemplation, and study. I was sixty years of age when my country summoned me and ordered me to interfere in its affairs. I obeyed. There were abuses, and I combated them; tyranny, and I destroyed it; rights and principles, and I proclaimed and confessed them; the territory was invaded, and I defended it; France was menaced, and I offered her my chest; I was not rich, and I am poor. I was one of the masters of the State; the bank cellars were so filled with specie that it was necessary to shore the walls up, which were ready to burst through the weight of gold and silver, but I dined in the Rue de l'Arbre Sec, at two-and-twenty sous a head. I succoured the oppressed. I relieved the suffering. I tore up the altar cloth, it is true, but it was to staunch the wounds of the country. I ever supported the onward march of the human race towards light, and I at times resisted pitiless progress. When opportunity served, I protected my adversaries, men of your class. And there is at Peteghem in Flanders, on the same site where the Merovingian Kings had their summer palace, a monastery of the Urbanists, the Abbey of St. Claire en Beaulieu, which I saved in 1793. I did my duty according to my strength, and what good I could. After which I was driven out, tracked, pursued, persecuted, maligned, mocked, spat upon, accursed, and proscribed. For many years I have felt that persons believed they had a right to despise me. My face has been held accursed by the poor ignorant mob, and, while hating no one, I accepted the isolation of hatred. Now, I am eighty-six years of age and on the point of death; what have you come to ask of me?"

"Your blessing!" said the Bishop, and knelt down.

When the Bishop raised his head again, the Conventionalist's countenance had become august: he had just expired. The Bishop returned home absorbed in the strangest thoughts, and spent the whole night in prayer. On the morrow, curious worthies tried to make him talk about G—— the Republican, but he only pointed to heaven. From this moment he increased his tenderness and fraternity for the little ones and the suffering.

One day a Dowager, of the impertinent breed which believes itself witty, asked him this question, "Monseigneur, people are asking when your Grandeur will have the red cap?" "Oh, oh!" the Bishop answered, "that is an ominous colour. Fortunately those who despise it in a cap venerate it in a hat."

## CHAPTER X.

### MONSEIGNEUR'S SOLITUDE.

THERE is nearly always round a bishop a squad of little abbés, as there is a swarm of young officers round a general. They are what that delightful St. Francis de Sales calls somewhere "sucking priests." Every career has its aspirants, who pay their respects to those who have reached the goal; there is not a power without its following, not a fortune without its court. The seekers for a future buzz round the splendid present. Every Metropolitan has his staff: every Bishop who is at all influential has his patrol of Seminarist Cherubim, who go the rounds, maintain order in the episcopal palace, and mount guard round Monseigneur's smile. Pleasing a bishop is a foot in the stirrup for a sub-deaconry; after all, a man must make his way, and apostles do not despise canonries. In the same way as there are "*gros bonnets*," elsewhere, there are large mitres in the Church.

Monseigneur Welcome, humble, poor, and out of the world, was not counted among the large mitres. This was visible in the utter absence of young priests around him. We have seen that at Paris "he did not take," and not an aspirant tried to cling to this solitary old man; not the most youthful ambition tried to flourish in his shade. His canons and vicars were good old men, walled up like him in this diocese which had no issue to the Cardinal's hat, and who resembled their Bishop with this difference, that they had finished while he was completed. The impossibility of growing up near Monseigneur Welcome was so well felt, that young priests whom he ordained at once obtained letters commendatory to the Archbishop of Aix, or Auch, and went off at score. For, after all, we repeat, men wished to be pushed upward. A saint who lives in a state of excessive self-denial is a dangerous neighbour: he might possibly communicate to you by contagion an incurable poverty, a stiffening of the joints, useful for advancement, and, in a word, more renunciation than you care for: and such scabby virtue is shunned. Hence came the isolation of Monseigneur Bienvenu. We live in the midst of a gloomy society; success—such is the teaching which falls drop by drop from the corruption which hangs over our heads.

Success is a very hideous thing, and its resemblance with merit deceives men. For the herd, success has nearly the same profile as supremacy. Success, that Menæchmus of talent, has a dupe in history, and Tacitus and Juvenal alone grumble at it. In our days an almost official philosophy wears the livery of success, and waits in its anteroom. Succeed, that is the theory, for prosperity presupposes capacity. Win in the lottery and you are a clever man, for he who triumphs is revered. All you want is to be born under a fortunate star. Have luck and you will have the rest, be fortunate and you will be thought a great man; leaving out five or six immense exceptions, which form the lustre of an age, contemporary admiration is bleary-eyedness. Gilding is gold, and it does you no harm to be any one so long as you are th/

parvenu. The mob is an old Narcissus, adoring itself and applauding the mob. That enormous faculty by which a man is a Moses, Æschylus, Dante, Michael Angelo, or Napoleon, the multitude decrees broadcast and by acclamation to any one who attains his object, no matter in what. Let a notary transfigure himself into a deputy ; a false Corneille produce Tiridates ; an eunuch contrive to possess a harem ; a military Prudhomme accidentally gain the decisive battle of an age ; an apothecary invent cardboard soles for the army of the Sambre et Meuse, and make out of the cardboard sold for leather an income of 400,000 francs a year ; a pedlar espouse usury and put it to bed with seven or eight millions, of which he is the father and she the mother ; a preacher become a bishop by his nasal twang ; let the steward of a good family be so rich on leaving service that he is made Chancellor of the Exchequer—and men will call it genius, in the same way as they call Mousqueton's face beauty and Claude's mien majesty. They confound with the constellations of profundity the stars which the duck's feet make in the soft mud of the pond. • •

## CHAPTER XI.

## WHAT HE BELIEVED.

It is not our business to gauge the Bishop of D—— from an orthodox point of view. In the presence of such a soul we only feel inclined to respect. The conscience of the just man must be believed on its word ; besides, certain natures granted, we admit the possibility of the development of all the beauties of human virtue in a creed differing from our own. What did he think of this dogma or that mystery ? These heart-secrets are only known to the tomb which souls enter in a state of nudity. What we are certain of is, that he never solved difficulties of faith by hypocrisy. It is impossible for the diamond

to rot. He believed as much as he possibly could, and would frequently exclaim, "I believe in the Father." He also derived from his good deeds that amount of satisfaction which suffices the conscience, and which whispers to you, "You are with God."

What we think it is our duty to note is that, beyond his faith, he had an excess of love. It was through this, *quia multum amavit*, that he was considered vulnerable by "serious men," "grave persons," and "reasonable people," those favourite phrases of our melancholy world in which selfishness is under the guidance of pedantry. What was this excess of love? it was a serene benevolence, spreading over men, as we have already indicated, and on occasion extending even to things. He loved without disdain, and was indulgent to GOD's creation. Every man, even the best, has in him an unreflecting harshness, which he reserves for animals, but the Bishop of D—— had not this harshness, which is, however, peculiar to many priests. He did not go so far as the Brahmin, but seemed to have meditated on the words of the preacher—"Who knoweth the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" An ugly appearance, a deformity of instinct, did not trouble him or render him indignant; he was moved, almost softened, by them. It seemed as if he thoughtfully sought, beyond apparent life, for the cause, the explanation, or the excuse. He examined without anger, and with the eye of a linguist deciphering a palimpsest, the amount of chaos which still exists in nature. This reverie at times caused strange remarks to escape from him. One morning he was in his garden and fancied himself alone; but his sister was walking behind, though unseen by him. He stopped and looked at something on the ground. It was a large black, hairy, horrible spider. His sister heard him mutter, "Poor brute, it is not thy fault." Why should we not repeat this almost divine childishness of goodness? It may be puerile, but of such were the puerilities of St. Francis d'Assisi and Marcus Aurelius. One day he sprained himself because he did not wish to crush an ant.



Such was the way in which this just man lived : at times he fell asleep in his garden, and then nothing could be more venerable. Monseigneur Welcome had been formerly, if we may believe the stories about his youth and even his manhood, a passionate, perhaps violent man. His universal mansuetude was less a natural instinct than the result of a grand conviction, which had filtered through life into his heart, and slowly dropped into it thought by thought, for in a character, as in a rock, there may be water holes. Such hollows, however, are ineffaceable, such formations indestructible. In 1815, as we think we have said, he reached his seventy-fifth year, but did not seem sixty. He was not tall, and had a tendency to stoutness, which he strove to combat by long walks ; he stood firmly, and was but very slightly built. But these are details from which we will not attempt to draw any conclusion, for Gregory XVI. at the age of eighty was erect and smiling, which did not prevent him being a bad priest. Monseigneur Welcome had what people call " a fine head," which was so amiable that its beauty was forgotten. When he talked with that infantine gaiety which was one of his graces you felt at your ease by his side, and joy seemed to emanate from his whole person. His fresh, ruddy complexion, and all his white teeth, which he had preserved and displayed when he laughed, gave him that open facile air which makes you say of an aged man, " He is a worthy person." That, it will be remembered, was the effect he produced on Napoleon. At the first glance, and when you saw him for the first time, he was in reality only a worthy man, but if you remained some hours in his company, and saw him in thought, he became gradually transfigured, and assumed something imposing ; his wide and serious brow, already august through the white hair, became also august through meditation ; majesty was evolved from the goodness ; though the latter did not cease to gleam, you felt the same sort of emotion as you would do if you saw a smiling angel slowly unfold his wings without ceasing to smile. An inexpressible respect gradually penetrated you and

ascended to your head, and you felt that you had before you one of those powerful, well-bred, and indulgent souls whose thoughts are so great that they cannot but be gentle.

As we have seen, prayer, celebration of the Mass, almsgiving, consoling the afflicted, tilling a patch of ground, frugality, hospitality, self-denial, confidence, study, and labour filled every day of his life. *Filled* is the exact word, and certainly the Bishop's day was full of good thoughts, good words, and good actions. Still, it was not complete. If cold or wet weather prevented him from spending an hour or two in the garden before going to bed after the two females had retired, it seemed as it were a species of rite of his to prepare himself for sleep by meditation, in the presence of the grand spectacle of the heavens by night. At times, even at an advanced hour of night, if the old maids were not asleep, they heard him slowly pacing the walks. He was then alone with himself, contemplative, peaceful, adoring, comparing the serenity of his heart with that of æther, affected in the darkness by the visible splendour of the constellations, and the invisible splendour of God, and opening his soul to thoughts which fall from the unknown. At such moments, offering up his heart at the hour when the nocturnal flowers offer up their perfumes, he could not have said himself, possibly, what was passing in his mind; but he felt something fly out of him and something descend into him.

He dreamed of the grandeur and presence of God; of future eternity, that strange mystery; of past eternity, that even stranger mystery; of all the infirmities which buried themselves before his eyes in all directions: and without seeking to comprehend the incomprehensible, he gazed at it. He did not study God; he was dazzled by Him. He considered this magnificent concourse of atoms which reveals forces, creates individualities in unity, proportions in space, innumerability in the Infinite, and through light produces beauty. Such a concourse

incessantly takes place, and is dissolved again, and hence come life and death.

He would sit down on a wood bench with his back against a rickety trellis, and gaze at the stars through the stunted sickly profiles of his fruit trees. This quarter of an acre, so poorly planted, and so encumbered with sheds and outhouses, was dear to him, and was sufficient for him. What more was wanting to this aged man, who divided the leisure of his life, which knew so little leisure, between gardening by day and contemplation by night? Was not this limited enclosure with the sky for its roof sufficient for him to be able to adore God by turns in His most delicious and most sublime works? Was not this everything, in fact? and what could be desired beyond? A small garden to walk about in, and immensity to dream in; at his feet, what can be cultivated and gathered; over his head, what can be studied and meditated; on the earth a few flowers, and all the stars in the heavens.

---

## CHAPTER XII.

### WHAT HE THOUGHT.

ONE last word.

As these details might, especially at the present day, and to employ an expression which is now fashionable, give the Bishop of D—— a certain "Pantheistic" physiognomy, and cause it to be believed, either to his praise or blame, that he had in him one of those personal philosophies peculiar to our age, which germinate sometimes in solitary minds, and grow until they take the place of religion, we must lay stress on the fact that not one of the persons who knew Monseigneur Welcome believed himself authorized in thinking anything of the sort. What enlightened this man was his heart, and his wisdom was the product of the light which emanates from it.

He had no systems, but abundance of deeds. Abstract speculations contain vertigo, and nothing indicates that he ventured his mind amid the Apocalypses. The apostle may be bold, but the bishop must be timid. He probably refrained from going too deep into certain problems reserved to some extent for great and terrible minds. There is a sacred horror beneath the portals of the enigma; the abyss is gaping before you, but something tells you that you must not enter: woe to the man who does so. Geniuses, in the profundities of abstraction and pure speculation, being situated, so to speak, above dogmas, propose their ideas to GOD; their prayer audaciously offers a discussion, and their adoration interrogates. This is direct religion, full of anxiety and responsibility for the man who attempts to carry the escarpment by storm.

Human meditation has no limits; at its own risk and peril it analyzes and produces its own bedazzlement; we might almost say that, through a species of splendid reaction, it dazzles nature with it. The mysterious world around us gives back what it receives, and it is probable that the contemplators are contemplated. However this may be, there are in the world men—are they men?—who distinctly perceive on the horizon of dreamland the heights of the Absolute, and have the terrible vision of the mountain of the Infinite. Monseigneur Welcome was not one of these men, for he was not a genius. He would have feared these sublimities, on which even very great men, like Swedenborg and Pascal, fell in their insanity. Assuredly, such powerful reveries have their utility, and by these arduous routes ideal perfection is approached, but he took a short cut—the Gospel. He did not attempt to convert his chasuble into Elijah's cloak, he cast no beam of the future over the gloomy heaving of events; there was nothing of the prophet or the Magus about him. This humble soul loved, that was all.

It is probable that he expanded prayer into a super-human aspiration; but a man can no more pray too much than he can love too much, and if it were a heresy to

pray further than the text, St. Theresa and St. Jérôme would be heretics. He bent down over all that groaned and all that expiated; the universe appeared to him an immense malady; he felt a fever everywhere; he heard the panting of suffering all around him, and without trying to solve the enigma, he sought to heal the wound. The formidable spectacle of created things developed tenderness in him; he was solely engaged in finding for himself and arousing in others the best way of pitying and relieving. Existence was to this good and rare priest a permanent subject of sorrow seeking for consolation.

There are some men who toil to extract gold, but he laboured to extract pity; the universal wretchedness was his mine. Sorrow all around was only an opportunity for constant kindness. "Love one another" he declared to be complete; he wished for nothing more, and that was his entire doctrine. One day the Senator, who believed himself a "philosopher," said to the Bishop, "Just look at the spectacle of the world; all are fighting, and the strongest man is the cleverest. Your 'love one another' is nonsense." "Well," Monseigneur Welcome replied, without discussion, "if it be nonsense, the soul must shut itself up in it like the pearl in the oyster." He consequently shut himself up in it, lived in it, was absolutely satisfied with it, leaving on one side those prodigious questions which attract and terrify, the unfathomable perspectives of the abstract, the precipices of metaphysics, all those depths which for the apostle converge in God, for the atheist in nothingness: destiny, good and evil, the war of being against being, human consciousness, the pensive somnambulism of the animal, transformation through death, the recapitulation of existences which the grave contains, the incomprehensible grafting of successive loves on the enduring Me, essence, substance, the Nil and Ens nature, liberty, necessity; in a word, he avoided all the gloomy precipices over which the gigantic archangels of the human mind bend, the formidable abysses which Lucretius, Manou, St. Paul, and Dante contemplate with

## FANTINE.

that flashing eye which seems, in regarding Infinity, to make stars sparkle in it.

Monseigneur Welcome was simply a man who accepted mysterious questions without scrutinizing, disturbing them, or troubling his own mind, and who had in his soul a grave respect for the shadow.

## BOOK II.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE CLOSE OF A DAY'S MARCH.

At the beginning of October, 1815, and about an hour before sunset, a man travelling on foot entered the little town of D——. The few inhabitants, who were at the moment at their windows or doors, regarded this traveller with a species of anxiety. It would be difficult to meet a wayfarer of more wretched appearance; he was a man of middle height, muscular and robust, and in the full vigour of life. He might be forty-six to forty-eight years of age. A cap with a leather peak partly concealed his sunburnt face, down which the perspiration streamed. His shirt of coarse yellow calico, fastened at the neck by a small silver anchor, allowed his hairy chest to be seen; he had on a neck-cloth twisted like a rope, trousers of blue-ticking worn and threadbare, white at one knee and torn at the other; an old grey ragged blouse patched at one elbow with a rag of green cloth: on his back a large, new, well-filled knapsack, and a large, knotty stick in his hand. His stockingless feet were thrust into iron-shod shoes, his hair was cut close, and his beard large. Perspiration, heat, travelling on foot, and the dust added something sordid to his wretched appearance. His hair was cut close and yet was bristling, for it was beginning to grow a little, and did not seem to have been cut for some time.

No one knew him, he was evidently passing through the

town. Where did he come from? The South perhaps, the sea-board, for he made his entrance into D—— by the same road Napoleon had driven along seven months previously when going from Cannes to Paris. The man must have been walking all day, for he seemed very tired. Some women in the old suburb at the lower part of the town had seen him halt under the trees on the Gassendi Boulevard, and drink from the fountain at the end of the walk. He must have been very thirsty, for the children that followed him saw him stop and drink again at the fountain on the Market-place. On reaching the corner of the Rue Poichevert, he turned to the left and proceeded to the Mayor's office. He went in and came out again a quarter of an hour after. A gendarme was sitting on the stone bench near the door, on which General Drouot had mounted on March 4th, to read to the startled town-folk of D—— the proclamation of the gulf of Juan. The man doffed his cap and bowed humbly to the gendarme; the latter, without returning the salute, looked at him attentively, and then entered the office.

There was at that time at D—— a capital inn, with the sign of the Cross of Colbas. This inn was kept by a certain Jacquin Labarre, a man highly respected in the town for his relationship to another Labarre, who kept the Three Dolphins at Grenoble, and had served in the Guides. When the Emperor landed, many rumours were current in the country about the Three Dolphins; it was said that General Bertrand, in the disguise of a waggoner, had stopped there several times in the month of January, and distributed crosses of honour to the soldiers, and handfuls of Napoleons to the towns-people. The fact was that the Emperor, on entering Grenoble, refused to take up his quarters at the Prefecture; he thanked the Mayor, and said, "I am going to a worthy man whom I know," and he went to the Three Dolphins. The glory of the Grenoble Labarre was reflected for a distance of five-and-twenty leagues on the Labarre of the Cross of Colbas. The towns-people said of him, "He is cousin to the one at Grenoble."



The man proceeded to this inn, which was the best in the town, and entered the kitchen, the door of which opened on the street. All the ovens were heated, and a large fire blazed cheerily in the chimney. The host, who was at the same time head-cook, went from the hearth to the stew-pans, very busy in attending to a dinner intended for the carriers, who could be heard singing and talking noisily in an adjoining room. Any one who has travelled knows that no people feed so well as carriers. A fat marmot, flanked by white-legged partridges and grouse, was turning on a long spit before the fire ; while two large carp from Lake Lauzet and an Allos trout were bubbling in the ovens. The landlord, on hearing the door open and a stranger enter, said, without raising his eyes from his stew-pans,—

“What do you want, sir ? ”

“Supper and a bed,” the man replied.

“Nothing easier,” said mine host. At this moment he looked up, took in the stranger’s appearance at a glance, and added, “For payment.”

The man drew a heavy leathern purse from the pocket of his blouse, and replied,—

“I have money.”

“In that case I am at your service,” said the host.

The man returned the purse to his pocket, took off his knapsack, placed it on the ground near the door, kept his stick in his hand, and sat down on a low stool near the fire. D—— is in the mountains, and the evenings there are cold in October. While going backwards and forwards the landlord still inspected his guest.

“Will supper be ready soon ? ” the man asked.

“Directly.”

While the newcomer had his back turned to warm himself, the worthy landlord took a pencil from his pocket, and then tore off the corner of an old newspaper which lay on a small table near the window. On the white margin he wrote a line or two, folded up the paper, and handed it to a lad who seemed to serve both as turnspit and page. The landlord whispered a word in the boy’s ear, and he

ran off in the direction of the Mayor's house. The traveller had seen nothing of all this, and he asked again whether supper would be ready soon. The boy came back with the paper in his hand, and the landlord eagerly unfolded it, like a man who is expecting an answer. He read it carefully, then shook his head, and remained thoughtful for a moment. At last he walked up to the traveller, who seemed plunged in anything but a pleasant reverie.

"I cannot make room for you, sir," he said.

The man half turned on his stool.

"What do you mean? Are you afraid I shall bilk you? Do you want me to pay you in advance? I have money, I tell you."

"It is not that."

"What is it, then?"

"You have money."

"Yes," said the man.

"But I have not a spare bedroom."

The man continued quietly: "Put me in the stables."

"I cannot."

"Why?"

"The horses take up all the room."

"Well," the man continued, "a corner in the loft and a truss of straw: we will see to that after supper."

"I cannot give you any supper."

This declaration, made in a measured but firm tone, seemed to the stranger serious. He rose.

"Nonsense, I am dying of hunger. I have been on my legs since sunrise, and have walked twenty leagues. I can pay, and demand food."

"I have none," said the landlord.

The man burst into a laugh, and turned to the chimney and the oven.

"Nothing! why what is all this?"

"All this is ordered."

"By whom?"

"By the carriers."

"How many are there of them?"

"Twelve."

"There is enough food here for twenty."

The man sat down again, and said without raising his voice,—

"I am at an inn, I am hungry, and so shall remain."

The landlord then stooped down, and whispered with an accent which made him start, "Be off with you."

The stranger at this moment was thrusting some logs into the fire with the ferule of his stick, but he turned quickly, and as he was opening his mouth to reply, the landlord continued in the same low voice: "Come, enough of this. Do you wish me to tell you your name? It is Jean Valjean. Now, do you wish me to tell you who you are? On seeing you come in I suspected something, so I sent to the police office, and this is the answer I received. Can you read?"

While saying this, he handed the stranger the paper which had travelled from the inn to the office and back again. The man took a glance at it, and his host continued after a moment's silence,—

"I am accustomed to be polite with everybody, so pray be off."

The man stooped, picked up his knapsack, and went off. He walked along the high street hap-hazard, keeping close to the houses like a sad and humiliated man. He did not look back once; had he done so he would have seen the landlord of the Cross of Colbas in his doorway surrounded by all his guests and the passers-by, talking eagerly and pointing to him; and judging from the looks of suspicion and terror, he might have guessed that ere long his arrival would be the event of the whole town. He saw nothing of all this, for men who are oppressed do not look back, as they know only too well that an evil destiny is following them.

He walked on thus for a long time, turning down streets he did not know, and forgetting his fatigue, as happens in sorrow. All at once he was sharply assailed by hunger: night was approaching, and he looked round to see

whether he could not discover a shelter. The best inn was closed against him, and he sought some very humble pot-house, some wretched den. At this moment a lamp was lit at the end of the street, and a fir-branch hanging from an iron bar stood out on the white twilight sky. He went towards it: it was really a pot-house. The stranger stopped for a moment and looked through the window into the low tap-room, which was lighted up by a small lamp on the table and a large fire on the hearth. Some men were drinking, and the landlord was warming himself; over the flames bubbled a cauldron hanging from an iron hook. This pot-house, which is also a sort of inn, has two entrances, one on the street, the other opening on a small yard full of manure. The traveller did not dare enter by the street door: he slipped into the yard, stopped once again, and then timidly raised the latch and entered the room.

"Who's there?" the landlord asked.

"Some one who wants a supper and bed."

"Very good. They are to be had here."

He went in, and all the toppers turned to look at him; they examined him for some time while he was taking off his knapsack. Said the landlord to him, "Here is a fire; supper is boiling in the pot; come and warm yourself, comrade."

He sat down in the ingle and stretched out his feet, which were swollen with fatigue. A pleasant smell issued from the cauldron. All that could be distinguished of his face under his cap-peak assumed a vague appearance of comfort blended with the other wretched appearance which the habit of suffering produces. It was, moreover, a firm, energetic, and sad profile; the face was strangely composed, for it began by appearing humble and ended by becoming severe. His eyes gleamed under his brows, like a fire under a curfew. One of the men seated at the table was a fishmonger, who, before entering the pot-house, had gone to put up his horse in Labarre's stables. Accident willed it, that on the same morning he had met this ill-looking stranger walking between Bras d'Âge and

— (I have forgotten the name, but I fancy it is Escoulon). Now, on meeting him, the man, who appeared very fatigued, had asked the fishmonger to give him a lift which had only made him go faster. This fishmonger had been half an hour previously one of the party surrounding Jacquin Labarre, and had told his unpleasant encounter in the morning to the people at the Cross of Colbas. He made an imperceptible sign to the landlord from his seat, and the latter went up to him, and they exchanged a few whispered words. The man had fallen back into his reverie.

The landlord went up to the chimney, laid his hand sharply on the man's shoulder, and said to him,—

“You must be off from here.”

The stranger turned and replied gently, “Ah, you know?”

“Yes.”

“I was turned out of the other inn.”

And so you will be out of this.”

“Where would you have me go?”

“Somewhere else.”

The man took his knapsack and stick and went away. As he stepped out, some boys who had followed him from the Cross of Colbas, and seemed to have been waiting for him, threw stones at him. He turned savagely, and threatened them with his stick, and the boys dispersed like a flock of birds. He passed in front of the prison, and pulled the iron bell-handle; a wicket was opened.

“Mr. Gaoler,” he said, as he humbly doffed his cap, “would you be kind enough to open the door and give me a night's lodging?”

A voice answered, “A prison is not an inn; get yourself arrested, and then I will open the door.”

The man entered a small street, in which there are numerous gardens, some of them being merely enclosed with hedges, which enliven the street. Among these gardens and hedges he saw a single-storeyed house, whose window was illuminated, and he looked through the panes as he had done at the pot-house. It was a large, white-

washed room, with a bed with printed chintz curtains, and a cradle in a corner, a few chairs, and a double-barrelled gun hanging on the wall. A table was laid for supper in the middle of the room; a copper lamp lit up the coarse white cloth, the tin mug glistening like silver and full of wine, and the brown, smoking soup-tureen. At this table was seated a man of about forty years of age, with a hearty, open face, who was riding a child on his knee. By his side a woman, still young, was suckling another child. The father was laughing, the children were laughing, and the mother was smiling. The stranger stood for a moment pensively before this gentle and calming spectacle; what was going on within him? It would be impossible to say, but it is probable that he thought that this joyous house would prove hospitable, and that where he saw so much happiness he might find a little pity. He tapped very slightly on a window pane, but was not heard; he tapped a second time, and he heard the woman say, "Husband, I fancy I can hear some one knocking."

"No," the husband answered.

He tapped a third time. The husband rose, took the lamp, and walked to the front door. He was a tall man, half peasant, half artisan; he wore a huge leathern apron, which came up to his left shoulder, and on which he carried a hammer, a red handkerchief, a powder-flask, and all sorts of things, which his belt held like a pocket. As he threw back his head, his turned-down shirt collar displayed his full neck, white and bare. He had thick eyebrows, enormous black whiskers, eyes flush with his head, a bull-dog lower jaw, and over all this that air of being at home, which is inexpressible.

"I beg your pardon, sir," the traveller said, "but would you, for payment, give me a plateful of soup and a corner to sleep in in your garden outhouse?"

"Who are you?" the owner of the cottage asked.

The man answered, "I have come from Puy Moisson; I have walked the whole day. Could you do it? for payment of course?"

"I would not refuse," the peasant answered, "to lodge any respectable person who paid. But why do you not go to the inn?"

"There is no room there."

"Nonsense! that is impossible; it is neither market nor fair day. Have you been to Labarre's?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

The traveller continued, with some hesitation, "I do not know why, but he refused to take me in."

"Have you been to what is his name, in the Rue de Chauffaut?"

The stranger's embarrassment increased; he stammered, "He would not take me in either."

The peasant's face assumed a suspicious look, he surveyed the newcomer from head to foot, and all at once exclaimed with a sort of shudder,—

"Can you be the man?"

He took another look at the stranger, placed the lamp on the table, and took down his gun. On hearing the peasant say "Can you be the man?" his wife had risen, taken her two children in her arms, and hurriedly sought refuge behind her husband, and looked in horror at the stranger as she muttered, "The villain!" All this took place in less time than is needed to imagine it. After examining the man for some minutes as if he had been a viper, the peasant returned to the door and said: "Be off!"

"For mercy's sake," the man continued, "a glass of water."

"A charge of shot!" the peasant said.

Then he violently closed the door, and the stranger heard two bolts fastened. A moment after the window shutters were closed, and the sound of the iron bar being put in reached his ear. Night was coming on apace: the cold wind of the Alps was blowing. By the light of the expiring day the stranger noticed in one of the gardens a sort of hut which seemed to him to be made of sods of turf. He boldly clambered over a railing and found him-

self in the garden ; he approached the hut, which had as entrance a narrow, extremely low door, and resembled the tenements which road-menders construct by the side of the highway. He doubtless thought it was such : he was suffering from cold and hunger, and though he had made up his mind to starve, it was at any rate a shelter against the cold. As this sort of residence is not usually occupied at night, he lay down on his stomach and crawled into the hut : it was warm, and he found rather good straw litter in it. He lay for a moment motionless on this bed as his fatigue was so great : but as his knapsack hurt his back and was a ready-made pillow, he began unbuckling one of the thongs. At this moment a hoarse growl was audible : he raised his eyes, and the head of an enormous mastiff stood out in the shadow at the opening of the hut, which was its kennel. The dog itself was strong and formidable, hence he raised his stick, employed his knapsack as a shield, and left the kennel as he best could, though not without enlarging the rents in his rags.

He also left the garden, but backwards, and compelled to twirl his stick in order to keep the dog at a respectful distance. When he, not without difficulty, had leapt the fence again, and found himself once more in the street, alone, without a bed, roof, or shelter, and expelled even from the bed of straw and the kennel, he fell rather than sat on a stone, and a passer-by heard him exclaim, " I am not even a dog." He soon rose and recommenced his walk. He left the town hoping to find some tree or mill in the fields which would afford him shelter. He walked on thus for some time with hanging head ; when he found himself far from all human habitations, he raised his eyes and looked around him. He was in a field, and had in front of him one of those low hills with close-cut stubble which resemble cropped heads. The horizon was perfectly black, but it was not solely the gloom of night, but low clouds, which seemed to be resting on the hill itself, rose and filled the whole sky. Still, as the moon was about to rise shortly, and a remnant of twilight still hovered in



the zenith, these clouds formed a species of whitish vault whence a gleam of light was thrown on the earth.

The ground was therefore more illumined than the sky, which produces a peculiarly sinister effect, and the hill with its paltry outlines stood out vaguely and dully on the gloomy horizon. The whole scene was hideous, mean, mournful, and confined; there was nothing in the field or on the hill but a stunted tree, which writhed and trembled a few yards from the traveller. This man was evidently far from possessing those delicate habits of mind which render persons sensible of the mysterious aspects of things, still there was in the sky, this hill, this plain, and this tree, something so profoundly desolate, that after standing motionless and thoughtful for a while he suddenly turned back. There are instants in which nature seems to be hostile.

He went back, and found the gates of the town closed. D——, which sustained sieges in the religious wars, was still begirt in 1815 by old walls flanked by square towers, which have since been demolished. He passed through a breach, and re-entered the town. It might be about eight o'clock in the evening, and as he did not know the streets he wandered about without purpose. He thus reached the prefecture and then the seminary; on passing through the Cathedral Square he shook his fist at the church. There is at the corner of this Square a printing-office, where the proclamations of the Emperor and the Imperial Guard to the army, brought from Elba, and drawn up by Napoleon himself, were first printed. Worn out with fatigue, and hopeless, he sat down on the stone bench at the door of this printing-office. An old lady who was leaving the church at the moment saw the man stretched out in the darkness.

"What are you doing there, my friend?" she said.

He answered, harshly and savagely, "You can see, my good woman, that I am going to sleep."

The good woman, who was really worthy of the name, was the Marchioness de R——.

"On that bench?" she continued.

"I have had for nineteen years a wooden mattress," the man said, "and now I have a stone one."

"Have you been a soldier?"

"Yes, my good woman."

"Why do you not go to the inn?"

"Because I have no money."

"Alas!" said Madame de R——, "I have only two pence in my purse."

"You can give them to me all the same."

The man took the money, and Madame de R—— continued, "You cannot lodge at an inn for so small a sum, still you should make the attempt, for you cannot possibly spend the night here. Doubtless you are cold and hungry, and some one might take you in for charity."

"I have knocked at every door."

"Well?"

"And was turned away at all."

The "good woman" touched the man's arm and pointed to a small house next to the Bishop's Palace.

"You have," she continued, "knocked at every door. Have you done so there?"

"No."

"Then do it."

## CHAPTER II.

### PRUDENCE RECOMMENDED TO WISDOM.

ON this evening, the Bishop of D——, after his walk in the town, had remained in his bedroom till a late hour. He was engaged on a heavy work on the "duties," which he unfortunately has left incomplete. He was still working at eight o'clock, writing rather uncomfortably on small squares of paper, with a large book open on his knees, when Madame Magloire came in as usual to fetch the plate from the wall-cupboard near the bed. A moment after, the Bishop, feeling that supper was ready, and that his sister might be waiting,

closed his book, rose from the table, and walked into the dining-room. It was an oblong apartment, as we have said, with a door opening on the street, and a window looking on the garden. Madame Magloire had laid the table, and while attending to her duties, was chatting with Mademoiselle Baptistine. A lamp was on the table, which was close to the chimney, in which a tolerable fire was lighted.

We can easily figure to ourselves the two females, who had both passed their sixtieth year : Madame Magloire, short, stout, and quick ; Mademoiselle Baptistine, gentle, thin, and frail, somewhat taller than her brother, dressed in a puce-coloured silk gown, the fashionable colour in 1806, which she had bought in Paris in that year and still wore. Madame Magloire wore a white cap, on her neck a gold *jeannette*, the only piece of feminine jewellery in the house, a very white handkerchief emerging from a black stuff gown with wide and short sleeves, a calico red and puce checked apron, fastened round the waist with a green ribbon, with a stomacher of the same stuff fastened with two pins at the top corners, heavy shoes and yellow stockings, like the Marseilles women. Mademoiselle Baptistine's gown was cut after the fashion of 1806, short-waisted, with epaulettes on the sleeves, flaps and buttons, and she concealed her grey hair by a curling front called *à l'enfant*.

Mademoiselle afterwards narrated so many times what took place at the Bishopric on this evening that several persons still living remember the slightest details. At the moment when the Bishop entered Madame Magloire was talking with some vivacity ; she was conversing with Mademoiselle on a subject that was familiar to her, and to which the Bishop was accustomed—it was the matter of the front door latch. It appears that while going to purchase something for supper, Madame Magloire had heard things spoken of in certain quarters ; people were talking of an ill-looking prowler, that a suspicious vagabond had arrived, who must be somewhere in the town, and that it would possibly be an

unpleasant thing for any one out late to meet him. The police were very badly managed because the Prefect and the Mayor were not friendly, and tried to injure each other by allowing things to happen. Hence wise people would be their own police, and be careful to close their houses *and lock their doors*.

Madame Magloire italicized the last sentence, but the Bishop had come from his room where it was rather cold, and was warming himself at the fire while thinking of other matters; in fact, he did not pick up the words which Madame Magloire had just let drop. She repeated them, and then Mademoiselle, who wished to satisfy Madame Magloire without displeasing her brother, ventured to say timidly,—

“Brother, do you hear what Madame Magloire is saying?”

“I vaguely heard something,” the Bishop answered; then he half turned his chair, placed his hand on his knees, and looked up at the old servant with his cordial and easily-pleased face, which the fire illumined from below: “Well, what is it? what is it? are we in any great danger?”

Then Madame Magloire told her story over again, while exaggerating it slightly, though unsuspecting of the fact. It would seem that a gipsy, a barefooted fellow, a sort of dangerous beggar, was in the town at the moment. He had tried to get a lodging at Jacquin Labarre’s, who had refused to take him in. He had been seen prowling about the streets at nightfall, and was evidently a gallows bird, with his frightful face.

“Is he really?” said the Bishop.

This cross-questioning encouraged Madame Magloire; it seemed to indicate that the Bishop was beginning to grow alarmed, and hence she continued triumphantly,—

“Yes, Monseigneur, it is so, and some misfortune will occur in the town this night; everybody says so, and then the police are so badly managed. Fancy living in a mountain town, and not even having lanterns in the streets at nights! You go out and find yourself in

pitch darkness. I say, Monseigneur, and Mademoiselle says——”

“I,” the sister interrupted, “say nothing; whatever my brother does is right.”

Madame Magloire continued, as if no protest had been made,—

“We say that this house is not at all safe, and that if Monseigneur permits I will go to Paulin Musebois, the locksmith, and tell him to put the old bolts on the door again; I have them by me, and it will not take a minute; and I say, Monseigneur, that we ought to have bolts if it were only for this night, for I say that a door which can be opened from the outside by the first passer-by is most terrible; besides, Monseigneur is always accustomed to say Come in, and in the middle of the night, oh my gracious! there is no occasion to ask for permission.”

At this moment there was a rather loud rap at the front door.

“Come in,” said the Bishop.

---

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE HEROISM OF PASSIVE OBEDIENCE.

THE door was thrown open wide, as if some one were pushing it energetically and resolutely. A man entered whom we already know; it was the traveller whom we saw just now wandering about in search of a shelter. He entered and stopped, leaving the door open behind him. He had his knapsack on his shoulder, his stick in his hand, and a rough, bold, wearied, and violent expression in his eyes. The fire-light fell on him; he was hideous; it was a sinister apparition.

Madame Magloire had not even the strength to utter a cry; she shivered and stood with widely-open mouth. Mademoiselle Baptistine turned, perceived the man who

entered, and half started up in terror ; then, gradually turning her head to the chimney, she began looking at her brother, and her face became again calm and serene. The Bishop fixed a quiet eye on the man, as he opened his mouth, doubtless to ask the new-comer what he wanted. The man leant both his hands on his stick, looked in turn at the two aged females and the old man, and, not waiting for the Bishop to speak, said in a loud voice,—

“ My name is Jean Valjean. I am a galley-slave, and have spent nineteen years in the bagne. I was liberated four days ago, and started for Pontarlier, which is my destination. I have been walking for four days since I left Toulon, and to-day I have marched twelve leagues. This evening on coming into the town I went to the inn, but was sent away in consequence of my yellow passport, which I had shown at the police office. I went to another inn, and the landlord said to me, Be off. It was the same everywhere, and no one would have any dealings with me. I went to the prison, but the gaoler would not take me in. I got into a dog’s kennel, but the dog bit me and drove me off, as if it had been a man ; it seemed to know who I was. I went into the fields to sleep in the star-light, but there were no stars. I thought it would rain, and as there was no GOD to prevent it from raining, I came back to the town to sleep in a doorway. I was lying down on a stone in the square, when a good woman pointed to your house, and said, Go and knock there. What sort of a house is this ? do you keep an inn ? I have money, 109 francs 15 sous, which I earned at the bagne by my nineteen years’ toil. I will pay, for what do I care for that, as I have money : I am very tired and frightfully hungry ; will you let me stay here ? ”

“ Madame Magloire,” said the Bishop, “ you will lay another knife and fork.”

The man advanced three paces, and approached the lamp which was on the table. “ Wait a minute,” he continued, as if he had not comprehended, “ that will not do. Did you not hear me say that I was a galley-slave, a convict, and have just come from the bagne ? ”

He took from his pocket a large yellow paper, which he unfolded. "Here is my passport, yellow as you see, which turns me out wherever I go. Will you read it? I can read it, for I learned to do so at the *bagne*, where there is a school for those who like to attend it. This is what is written in my passport: 'Jean Valjean, a liberated convict, native of'—but that does not concern you—'has remained nineteen years at the galleys. Five years for robbery with house-breaking, fourteen years for having tried to escape four times. The man is very dangerous.' All the world has turned me out, and are you willing to receive me? is this an inn? will you give me some food and a bed? have you a stable?"

"Madame Magloire," said the Bishop, "you will put clean sheets on the bed in the alcove."

We have already explained of what nature was the obedience of the two females. Madame Magloire left the room to carry out the orders. The Bishop turned to the man.

"Sit down and warm yourself, sir., We shall sup directly, and your bed will be got ready while we are supping."

The man understood this at once. The expression of his face, which had hitherto been gloomy and harsh, was marked with stupefaction, joy, doubt, and became extraordinary. He began stammering like a lunatic.

"Is it true? what? You will let me stay, you will not turn me out, a convict? You call me *Sir*, you do not 'thou' me. 'Get out, dog,' that is what is always said to me; I really believed that you would turn me out, and hence told you at once who I am! Oh, what a worthy woman she was who sent me here! I shall have supper, a bed with mattresses and sheets, like everybody else. For nineteen years I have not slept in a bed! You really mean that I am to stay. You are worthy people; besides, I have money, and will pay handsomely. By the way, what is your name, Mr. Landlord? I will pay anything you please, for you are a worthy man. You keep an inn, do you not?"

"I am," said the Bishop, "a priest living in this house."

"A priest!" the man continued. "Oh! what a worthy priest! I suppose you will not ask me for money. The Curé, I suppose, the Curé of that big church? Oh yes, what an ass I am, I did not notice your cassock."

While speaking he deposited his knapsack and stick in a corner, returned his passport to his pocket, and sat down. While Mademoiselle Baptistine regarded him gently, he went on,—

"You are humane, sir, and do not feel contempt. A good priest is very good. Then you do not want me to pay?"

"No," said the Bishop, "keep your money. How long did you take in earning these 109 francs?"

"Nineteen years."

"Nineteen years!" The Bishop gave a deep sigh.

The man went on,—"I have all my money still; in four days I have only spent 25 sous, which I earned by helping to upload carts at Grasse. As you are an abbé I will tell you: we had a chaplain at the bagne and one day I saw a bishop, Monseigneur, as they call him. He is the curé over the curés; but pardon me, you know that, placed as we are, we convicts know and explain such things badly, and for me in particular it is so far away in the past. He said mass in the middle of the bagne at an altar, and had a pointed gold thing on his head, which glistened in the bright sunshine; we were drawn up on three sides of a square, with guns and lighted matches facing us. He spoke, but was too far off, and we did not hear him. That is what a bishop is."

While he was speaking the Bishop had gone to close the door, which had been left open. Madame Magloire came in, bringing a silver spoon and fork, which she placed on the table.

"Madame Magloire," said the Bishop, "lay them as near as you can to the fire;" and turning to his guest, he said, "The night breeze is sharp on the Alps, and you must be cold, sir."



Each time he said the word *Sir* with his gentle grave voice the man's face was illumined. *Sir* to a convict is the glass of water to a man dying of thirst at sea. Ignominy thirsts for respect.

"This lamp gives a very bad light," the Bishop continued. Madame Magloire understood, and fetched from the chimney of Monseigneur's bedroom the two silver candlesticks, which she placed on the table ready lighted.

"Monsieur le Curé," said the man, "you are good, and do not despise me. You receive me as a friend and light your wax candles for me, and yet I have not hidden from you whence I come, and that I am an unfortunate fellow."

The Bishop, who was seated by his side, gently touched his hand. "You need not have told me who you were; this is not my house, but the house of Christ. This door does not ask a man who enters whether he has a name, but if he has a sorrow; you are suffering, you are hungry and thirsty, and so be welcome. And do not thank me, or say that I am receiving you in my house, for no one is at home here excepting the man who has need of an asylum. I tell you, who are a passer-by, that you are more at home here than I am myself, and all there is here is yours. Why do I want to know your name? besides, before you told it to me you had one which I knew."

The man opened his eyes in amazement.

"Is that true? you know my name?"

"Yes," the Bishop answered, "you are my brother."

"Monsieur le Curé," the man exclaimed, "I was very hungry when I came in, but you are so kind that I do not know at present what I feel; it has passed over."

The Bishop looked at him and said,—

"You have suffered greatly?"

"Oh! the red jacket, the cannon ball on your foot, a plank to sleep on, heat, cold, labour, the set of men, the blows, the double chain for a nothing, a dungeon for a

word, the chain—even when you are ill in bed. The very dogs are happier. Nineteen years ! and I am forty-six ; and now, the yellow passport ! ”

“ Yes,” said the Bishop, “ you have come from a place of sorrow. Listen to me ; there will be more joy in heaven over the tearful face of a repentant sinner than over the white robes of one hundred just men. If you leave that mournful place with thoughts of hatred and anger against your fellow-men you are worthy of pity ; if you leave it with thoughts of kindness, gentleness, and peace, you are worth more than any of us.”

In the meanwhile Madame Magloire had served the soup : it was made of water, oil, bread, and salt, and a little bacon, and the rest of the supper consisted of a piece of mutton, figs, a fresh cheese, and a loaf of rye bread. She had herself added a bottle of old Mauves wine. The Bishop’s face suddenly assumed the expression of gaiety peculiar to hospitable natures. “ To table,” he said eagerly, as he was wont to do when any stranger supped with him ; and he bade the man sit down on his right hand, while Mlle. Baptistine, perfectly peaceful and natural, took her seat on his left. The Bishop said grace, and then served the soup himself, according to his wont. The man began eating greedily. All at once the Bishop said,—

“ It strikes me that there is something wanting on the table.”

Madame Magloire, truth to tell, had only laid the absolutely necessary silver. Now it was the custom in this house, when the Bishop had any one to supper, to arrange the whole stock of plate on the table, as an innocent display. This graceful semblance of luxury was a species of childishness full of charm in this gentle and strict house, which elevated poverty to dignity. Madame Magloire took the hint, went out without a word, and a moment after the remaining spoons and forks glittered on the cloth, symmetrically arranged before each of the guests.

## CHAPTER IV.

## CHEESEMAKING AT PONTARLIER.

AND now, in order to give an idea of what took place at table, we cannot do better than transcribe a passage of a letter written by Mademoiselle Baptistine to Madame Boischevron, in which the conversation between the convict and the Bishop is recorded with simple minuteness.

\* \* \* \* \*

"The man paid no attention to any one; he ate with frightful voracity, but after supper he said,—

" 'Monsieur le Curé, all this is much too good for me, but I am bound to say that the carriers who would not let me sup with them have better cheer than you.'

"Between ourselves, this remark slightly offended me, but my brother answered,—

" 'They are harder worked than I am.'

" 'No,' the man continued, 'they have more money. You are poor, as I can plainly see; perhaps you are not even curé. Ah, if Heaven were just you ought to be a curé.'

" 'Heaven is more than just,' said my brother. A moment after he added,—

" 'Monsieur Jean Valjean, I think you said you were going to Pontarlier?'

" 'I am compelled to go there.' Then he continued, 'I must be off by sunrise to-morrow morning; it is a tough journey, for if the nights are cold the days are hot.'

" 'You are going to an excellent part of the country,' my brother resumed. 'When the Revolution ruined my family I sought shelter first in Franche Comté, and lived there for some time by the labour of my arms. I had a good will, and found plenty to do, as I need only choose. There are paper-mills, tanneries, distilleries, oil-mills, wholesale manufacturers of clocks, steel works, copper works, and at least twenty iron foundries, of which the

four at Lods, Chatillon, Audincourt, and Beure are very large.'

"I am pretty sure I am not mistaken, and that they are the names my brother mentioned; then he broke off and addressed me.

" 'My dear sister, have we not some relatives in those parts?'

"My answer was, 'We used to have some; among others Monsieur de Lucinet, who was Captain of the gates at Pontarlier, under the ancient régime.'

" 'Yes,' my brother continued, 'but in '93 people had no relatives, but only their arms, and so I worked. In the country to which you are going, Monsieur Valjean, there is a truly patriarchal and pleasing trade. My dear sister, I mean their cheese manufactures, which they call *fruitières*.'

"Then my brother, while pressing this man to eat, explained in their fullest details the *fruitières* of Pontarlier, which were divided into two classes—the large farms which belong to the rich, and where there are forty or fifty cows, which produce seven to eight thousand cheeses in the summer, and the partnership *fruitières*, which belong to the poor. The peasants of the central mountain district keep their cows in common and divide the produce. They have a cheese-maker, who is called the *grurin*; he receives the milk from the partners thrice a day, and enters the quantities in a book. The cheese-making begins about the middle of April, and the dairy farmers lead their cows to the mountains toward mid-summer.

"The man grew animated while eating, and my brother made him drink that excellent Mauves wine, which he does not drink himself because he says that it is expensive. My brother gave him all these details with that easy gaiety of his which you know, mingling his remarks with graceful appeals to myself. He dwelt a good deal on the comfortable position of the *grurin*, as if wishing that this man should understand, without advising him directly and harshly, that it would be a refuge

for him. One thing struck me : the man was as I have described him to you ; well, my brother, during the whole of supper, and indeed of the evening, did not utter a word which could remind this man of what he was, or tell him who my brother was. It was apparently a good opportunity to give him a little lecture, and let the Bishop produce a permanent effect on the galley-slave. It might have seemed to any one else that having this wretched man in hand it would be right to feed his mind at the same time as his body, and address to him some reproaches seasoned with morality and advice, or at any rate a little commiseration, with an exhortation to behave better in future. My brother did not even ask him where he came from, or his history, for his fault is contained in his history, and my brother appeared to avoid everything which might call it to his mind. This was carried to such a point that at a certain moment, when my brother was talking about the mountaineers of Pontarlier, ' who had a pleasant task near heaven,' and who, he added, ' are happy because they are innocent,' he stopped short, fearing lest there might be in the remark something which might unpleasantly affect this man. After considerable reflection, I believe I can understand what was going on in my brother's heart : he doubtless thought that this Jean Valjean had his misery ever present in his mind, that the best thing was to distract his attention, and make him believe, were it only momentarily, that he was a man like the rest, by behaving to him as he would to others. Was not this really charity ! Is there not, my dear lady, something truly evangelical in this delicacy, which abstains from all lecturing and allusions ; and is it not the best pity, when a man has a sore point, not to touch it at all ? It seemed to me that this might be my brother's innermost thought : in any case, what I can safely say is, that if he had all these ideas, he did not let any of them be visible, even to me ; he was from beginning to end the same man he is every night, and he supped with Jean Valjean with the same air and in the same way as if he had been

supping with M. Gedeon le Provost, or with the parish curate.

"Toward the end, when he had come to the figs, there was a knock at the door. It was Mother Gerbaud with her little baby in her arms. My brother kissed the child's forehead, and borrowed from me 15 sous which I happened to have about me, to give them to the mother. The man, while this was going on, did not seem to pay great attention: he said nothing, and seemed very tired. When poor old Mother Gerbaud left, my brother said grace, and then said to this man: 'You must need your bed.' Madame Magloire hastily removed the plate. I understood that we must retire in order to let this traveller sleep, and we both went upstairs. I, however, sent Madame Magloire to lay on the man's bed a roebuck's hide from the Black Forest, which was in my room, for the nights are very cold, and that keeps you warm. It is a pity that this skin is old and the hair is wearing off. My brother bought it when he was in Germany, at Tottlingen, near the source of the Danube, as well as the small ivory-handled knife which I use at meals.

"Madame Magloire came up again almost immediately. We said our prayers in the room where the clothes are hung up to dry, and then retired to our bedrooms without saying a word to each other."

## CHAPTER V.

### TRANQUILLITY.

AFTER bidding his sister good-night, Monseigneur Welcome took up one of the silver candlesticks, handed the other to his guest, and said,—

"I will lead you to your room, sir."

The man followed him. The reader will remember, from our description, that the rooms were so arranged

that in order to reach the oratory where the alcove was it was necessary to pass through the Bishop's bedroom. At the moment when he went through this room Madame Magloire was putting away the plate in the cupboard over the bed head: it was the last job she did every night before retiring. The Bishop led his guest to the alcove, where a clean bed was prepared for him; the man placed the branched candlestick on a small table.

"I trust you will pass a good night," said the Bishop. "To-morrow morning, before starting, you will drink a glass of milk fresh from our cows."

"Thank you, Monsieur l'Abbé," the man said. He had hardly uttered these peaceful words when, suddenly and without any transition, he had a strange emotion, which would have frightened the two old females to death had they witnessed it. Even at the present day it is difficult to account for what urged him at the moment. Did he wish to warn or to threaten? was he simply obeying a species of instinctive impulse which was obscure to himself? He suddenly turned to the old gentleman, folded his arms, and, fixing on him a savage glance, he exclaimed hoarsely,—

"What! you really lodge me so close to you as that?" He broke off and added with a laugh, in which there was something monstrous,—

"Have you reflected fully? who tells you that I have not committed a murder?"

The Bishop answered: "That concerns God."

Then gravely moving his lips, like a man who is praying and speaking to himself, he stretched out two fingers of his right hand and blessed the man, who did not bow his head, and returned to his bedroom, without turning his head or looking behind him. When the alcove was occupied, a large serge curtain drawn right across the oratory concealed the altar. The Bishop knelt down as he passed before the curtain, and offered up a short prayer; a moment after he was in his garden, walking, dreaming, contemplating, his soul and thoughts entirely occupied

by those grand mysteries which God displays at night to eyes that remain open.

As for the man, he was really so wearied that he did not even take advantage of the nice white sheets. He blew out the candle with his nostrils, after the fashion of convicts, and threw himself in his clothes upon the bed, where he at once fell into a deep sleep. Midnight was striking as the Bishop returned from the garden to his room, and a few minutes later everybody was asleep in the small house.

## CHAPTER VI.

### JEAN VALJEAN.

TOWARD the middle of the night Jean Valjean awoke. He belonged to a poor peasant family of La Brie. In his childhood he had not been taught to read, and when he was of man's age he was a wood-lopper at Faverolles. His mother's name was Jeanne Mathieu, his father's Jean Valjean or Vlajean, probably a sobriquet and a contraction of *Voilà Jean*. Jean Valjean possessed a pensive but not melancholy character, which is peculiar to affectionate natures; but altogether he was a dull, insignificant fellow, at least apparently. He had lost father and mother when still very young: the latter died of a badly-managed milk fever; the former, a pruner, like himself, was killed by a fall from a tree. All that was left Jean Valjean was a sister older than himself, a widow with seven children, boys and girls. This sister brought Jean Valjean up, and so long as her husband was alive she supported her brother. When the husband died, the oldest of the seven children was eight years of age, the youngest, one, while Jean Valjean had just reached his twenty-fifth year; he took the place of the father, and in his turn supported the sister who had reared him. This was done simply as a duty, and even rather roughly, by Jean Valjean; and his youth



was thus expended in hard and ill-paid toil. He was never known to have had a sweetheart, for he had no time for love-making.

At night he came home tired, and ate his soup without saying a word. His sister, mother Jeanne, while he was eating, often took out of his porringer the best part of his meal, the piece of meat, the slice of bacon, or the heart of the cabbage, to give it to one of her children; he, still eating, bent over the table with his head almost in the soup, and his long hair falling round his porringer and hiding his eyes, pretended not to see it, and let her do as she pleased. There was at Faverolles, not far from the Valjeans' cottage, on the other side of the lane, a farmer's wife called Marie Claude. The young Valjeans, who were habitually starving, would go at times and borrow in the mother's name a pint of milk from Marie Claude, which they drank behind a hedge or in some corner, tearing the vessel from each other so eagerly that the little girls spilt the milk over their aprons. The mother, had she been aware of this fraud, would have severely corrected the delinquents; but Jean Valjean, coarse and rough though he was, paid Marie Claude for the milk behind his sister's back, and the children were not punished.

He earned in the pruning season eighteen sous a day, and besides hired himself out as reaper, labourer, neat-herd, and odd man. He did what he could; his sister worked too, but what could she do with seven children? It was a sad group, which wretchedness gradually enveloped and choked. One winter was hard, and Jean had no work to do, and the family had no bread. No bread, literally none, and seven children.

One Sunday evening, Maubert Isabeau, the baker in the church square of Faverolles, was just going to bed when he heard a violent blow dealt the grating in front of his shop. He arrived in time to see an arm passed through a hole made by a fist through the grating and window pane; the arm seized a loaf, and carried it off. Isabeau ran out hastily; the thief ran away at his hardest, but the baker caught him up and stopped him. The thief

had thrown away the loaf, but his arm was still bleeding ; it was Jean Valjean.

This took place in 1795. Jean Valjean was brought before the courts of the day, charged "with burglary committed with violence at night, in an inhabited house." He had a gun, was a splendid shot, and a bit of a poacher, and this injured him. Jean Valjean was found guilty, and the terms of the code were formal. There are in our civilization terrible hours ; they are those moments in which penal justice pronounces shipwreck on a man. What a mournful minute is that in which society withdraws and consummates the irreparable abandonment of a thinking being ! Jean Valjean was sentenced to five years at the galleys.

On April 22nd, 1796, men were crying in the streets of Paris the victory of Montenotte, gained by the General-in-chief of the army of Italy, whom the message of the Directory to the Five Hundred of 2 Floréal, an IV., calls Buona-Parte ; and on the same day a heavy gang was put in chains at Bicêtre, and Jean Valjean formed part of the chain. An ex-gaoler of the prison, who is now nearly ninety years of age, perfectly remembers the wretched man, who was chained at the end of the fourth cordon, in the north angle of the courtyard. He was seated on the ground like the rest, and seemed not at all to understand his position, except that it was horrible. It is probable that he also saw something excessive through the vague ideas of an utterly ignorant man. While the bolt of his iron collar was being riveted with heavy hammer blows behind his head, he wept, tears choked him, and prevented him from speaking, and he could only manage to say from time to time, "I was a wood-cutter at Faverolles." Then, while still continuing to sob, he raised his right hand, and lowered it gradually seven times, as if touching seven uneven heads in turn, and from this gesture it could be guessed that whatever the crime he had committed, he had done it to feed and clothe seven children.

He started for Toulon, and arrived there after a

journey of twenty-seven days in a cart, with a chain on his neck. At Toulon he was dressed in the red jacket. All that had hitherto been his life, even to his name, was effaced. He was no longer Jean Valjean, but No. 24,601. What became of his sister, what became of the seven children? Who troubles himself about that? What becomes of the spray of leaves when the stem of the young tree has been cut at the foot? It is always the same story. These poor living beings, these creatures of God, henceforth without support, guide, or shelter, went off hap-hazard, and gradually buried themselves in that cold fog in which solitary destinies are swallowed up, that mournful gloom in which so many unfortunates disappear during the sullen progress of the human race. They left their country; what had once been their steeple forgot them; what had once been their hedgerow forgot them; and after a few hours' stay in the bagne, Jean Valjean himself forgot them. In that heart where there had once been a wound there was now a scar: that was all. He only heard about his sister once during the whole time he spent at Toulon; it was, I believe, toward the end of the fourth year of his captivity, though I have forgotten in what way the information reached him. She was in Paris, living in the Rue du Geindre, a poor street, near Saint Sulpice, and had only one child with her, the youngest, a boy. Where were the other six? perhaps she did not know herself. Every morning she went to a printing office, No. 3 Rue du Sabot, where she was a folder and stitcher; she had to be there at six in the morning, long before daylight in winter. In the same house as the printing-office there was a day-school, to which she took the little boy, who was seven years of age, but as she went to work at six and the school did not open till seven o'clock, the boy was compelled to wait in the yard for an hour, in winter—an hour of night in the open air. The boy was not allowed to enter the printing-office, because it was said that he would be in the way. The workmen as they passed in the morning saw the poor little fellow seated on the pavement, and often sleeping

in the darkness, with his head on his satchel. When it rained, an old woman, the portress, took pity on him ; she invited him into her den, where there were only a bed, a spinning-wheel, and two chairs, when the little fellow fell asleep in a corner, clinging to the cat, to keep him warm. This is what Jean Valjean was told ; it was a momentary flash, as it were a window suddenly opened in the destiny of the beings he had loved, and then all was closed again ; he never heard about them more. Nothing reached him from them ; he never saw them again, never met them, and we shall not come across them in the course of this melancholy narrative.

Toward the end of this fourth year, Jean Valjean's turn to escape arrived, and his comrades aided him as they always do in this sorrowful place. He escaped, and wandered about the fields at liberty for two days—if it is liberty to be hunted down ; to turn one's head at every moment ; to start at the slightest sound ; to be afraid of everything, of a chimney that smokes, a man who passes, a barking dog, a galloping horse, the striking of the hour, of day because people see, of night because they do not see, of the highway, the path, the thicket, and even sleep. On the evening of the second day he was recaptured ; he had not eaten or slept for six-and-thirty hours. The maritime tribunal added three years to his sentence for his crime, which made it eight years. In the sixth year, it was again his turn to escape ; he tried, but could not succeed. He was missing at roll call, the gun was fired, and at night the watchman found him hidden under the keel of a ship that was building, and he resisted the *garde chiourme*, who seized him. Escape and rebellion : this fact, foreseen by the special code, was punished by an addition of five years, of which two would be spent in double chains. Thirteen years. In his tenth year his turn came again, and he took advantage of it, but succeeded no better ; three years for this new attempt, or sixteen years in all. Finally, I think it was during his thirteenth year that he made a last attempt, and only succeeded so far as to be recaptured in four hours : three

years for these four hours, and a total of nineteen years. In October, 1815, he was liberated ; he had gone in in 1796 for breaking a window and stealing a loaf.

In nineteen years, Jean Valjean, the inoffensive wood-feller of Faverolles, and the formidable galley-slave of Toulon, had become, thanks to the manner in which the bagne had fashioned him, capable of two sorts of bad actions : first, a rapid, unreflecting bad deed, entirely instinctive, and a species of reprisals for the evil he had suffered ; and, secondly, of a grave, serious, evil deed, discussed conscientiously and meditated with the false ideas which such a misfortune can produce. His pre-meditations passed through the three successive phases which nature of a certain temperament can alone undergo, reasoning, will, and obstinacy. He had for his motives habitual indignation, bitterness of soul, the profound feeling of iniquities endured, and reaction even against the good, the innocent, and the just, if such exist. The starting-point, like the goal, of all his thoughts, was hatred of human law ; that hatred, which, if it be not arrested in its development by some providential incident, becomes within a given time a hatred of society, then a hatred of the human race, next a hatred of creation, and which is expressed by a vague, incessant, and brutal desire to injure some one, no matter whom. As we see, it was not unfairly that the passport described Jean Valjean as a highly dangerous man. Year by year this soul had become more and more withered, slowly but fatally. A dry soul must have a dry eye, and on leaving the bagne, nineteen years had elapsed since he had shed a tear.

## CHAPTER VII.

### WIDENING THE GAP.

WHEN the hour for quitting the bagne arrived, when Jean Valjean heard in his ear the unfamiliar words " You are

free," the moment seemed improbable and extraordinary, and a ray of bright light, of the light of the living, penetrated to him; but it soon grew pale. Jean Valjean had been dazzled by the idea of liberty, and had believed in a new life, but he soon saw what sort of liberty it is to which a yellow passport is attached. And along with this there was much bitterness; he had calculated that his earnings, during his stay at the *bagne*, should have amounted to 171 francs. We are bound to add that he had omitted to take into his calculations the forced rest of Sundays and holidays, which, during nineteen years, entailed a diminution of about 24 francs. However this might be, the sum was reduced, through various local stoppages, to 109 francs, 15 sous, which were paid to him when he left the *bagne*. He did not understand it all, and fancied that he had been robbed.

On the day after his liberation, he saw at Grasse men in front of a distillery of orange-flower water, men unloading bales; he offered his services, and as the work was of a pressing nature, they were accepted. He set to work, he was intelligent, powerful, and skilful, and his master appeared satisfied. While he was at work a gendarme passed, noticed him, asked for his paper, and he was compelled to show his yellow pass. This done, Jean Valjean resumed his toil. A little while previously he had asked one of the workmen what he earned for his day's work, and the answer was 30 sous. At night, as he was compelled to start again the next morning, he went to the master of the distillery and asked for payment; the master did not say a word, but gave him 15 sous, and when he protested, the answer was "That is enough for you." He became pressing, the master looked him in the face and said, "Mind you don't get into prison."

Here again he regarded himself as robbed; society, the state, by diminishing his earnings, had robbed him wholesale; now it was the turn of the individual to commit retail robbery. Liberation is not deliverance; a man may leave the *bagne*, but not condemnation. We have seen

what happened to him at Grasse, and we know how he was treated at D——.

---

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE MAN AWAKE.

As two o'clock pealed from the cathedral bell, Jean Valjean awoke. What aroused him was that the bed was too comfortable ; for close on twenty years he had not slept in a bed, and though he had not undressed, the sensation was too novel not to disturb his sleep. He had been asleep for more than four hours, and his weariness had worn off ; and he was accustomed not to grant many hours to repose. He opened his eyes and looked into the surrounding darkness, and then he closed them again to go to sleep once more. When many diverse sensations have agitated a day, and when matters preoccupy the mind, a man may sleep, but he cannot go to sleep again. Sleep comes more easily than it returns, and this happened to Jean Valjean. As he could not go to sleep again, he began thinking.

It was one of those moments in which the ideas that occupy the mind are troubled, and there was a species of obscure oscillation in his brain. His old recollections and immediate recollections crossed each other, and floated confusedly, losing their shape, growing enormously, and then disappearing suddenly, as if in troubled and muddy water. Many thoughts occurred to him, but there was one which constantly reverted and expelled all the rest. This thought we will at once describe. He had noticed the six silver forks and spoons and the great ladle which Madame Magloire put on the table. This plate overwhelmed him—it was there—a few yards from him. When he crossed the adjoining room to reach the one in which he now was, the old servant was putting it in a small cupboard at the bed head—he had carefully noticed this cupboard—it was on the right as you came in from the dining-room. The plate was heavy and old, the big soup-ladle

was worth at least 200 francs, or double what he had earned in nineteen years, though it was true that he would have earned more had not the officials robbed him.

His mind oscillated for a good hour. When three o'clock struck he opened his eyes, suddenly sat up, stretched out his arms, and felt for his knapsack which he had thrown into a corner of the alcove, then let his legs hang, and felt himself seated on the bedside almost without knowing how. He remained for a while thoughtfully in this attitude, which would have had something sinister about it, for any one who had seen him, the only wakeful person in the house. All at once he stooped, took off his shoes, then resumed his thoughtful posture, and remained motionless. In the midst of this hideous meditation, the ideas which we have indicated incessantly crossed his brain, entered, went out, returned, and weighed upon him; and then he thought, without knowing why, and with the mechanical obstinacy of reverie, of a convict he had known at the bagné, of the name of Brevét, whose trousers were only held up by a single knitted brace. The draught-board design of that brace incessantly returned to his mind. He remained in this situation, and would have probably remained so till sunrise, had not the clock struck the quarter or the half-hour. It seemed as if this stroke said to him, To work! He rose, hesitated for a moment, and listened; all was silent in the house, and he went on tip-toe to the window, through which he peered. The night was not very dark; there was a full moon, across which heavy clouds were chased by the wind. This produced alternations of light and shade, and a species of twilight in the room; this twilight, sufficient to guide him, but intermittent in consequence of the clouds, resembled that livid hue produced by the grating of a cellar over which people are continually passing. On reaching the window, Jean Valjean examined it; it was without bars, looked on the garden, and was only closed, according to the fashion of the country, by a small peg. He opened it, but as a cold, sharp breeze suddenly entered the room, he closed it again directly. He gazed into the garden with that atten-



tive glance which studies rather than looks, and found that it was enclosed by a whitewashed wall, easy to climb over. Beyond it he noticed the tops of trees standing at regular distances, which proved that this wall separated the garden from a public walk.

After taking this glance, he walked boldly to the alcove, opened his knapsack, took out something which he laid on the bed, put his shoes in one of the pouches, placed the knapsack on his shoulders, put on his cap, the peak of which he pulled over his eyes, groped for his stick, which he placed in the window nook, and then returned to the bed, and took up the object he had laid on it. It resembled a short iron bar, sharpened at one of its ends. It would have been difficult to distinguish in the darkness for what purpose this piece of iron had been fashioned ; perhaps it was a lever, perhaps it was a club. By daylight it could have been seen that it was nothing but a miner's candlestick. The convicts at that day were sometimes employed in extracting rock from the lofty hills that surround Toulon, and it was not infrequent for them to have mining tools at their disposal. The miner's candlesticks are made of massive steel, and have a point at the lower end, by which they are dug into the rock. He took the bar in his right hand, and holding his breath and deadening his footsteps he walked towards the door of the adjoining room, the Bishop's, as we know. On reaching this door he found it ajar—the Bishop had not shut it.

## CHAPTER IX.

### WHAT HE DID.

JEAN VALJEAN listened, but there was not a sound ; he pushed the door with the tip of his finger lightly, and with the furtive, restless gentleness of a cat that wants to get in. The door yielded to the pressure, and made an almost imperceptible and silent movement, which slightly

widened the opening. He waited for a moment, and then pushed the door again more boldly. It continued to yield silently, and the opening was soon large enough for him to pass through. But there was near the door a small table which formed an awkward angle with it, and barred the entrance.

Jean Valjean noticed the difficulty : the opening must be increased at all hazards. He made up his mind, and pushed the door a third time, more energetically still. This time there was a badly-oiled hinge, which suddenly uttered a hoarse, prolonged cry in the darkness. Jean Valjean started ; the sound of the hinge smote his ear startlingly and formidably, as if it had been the trumpet of the day of judgment. In the fantastic exaggerations of the first minute, he almost imagined that this hinge had become animated, and suddenly obtained a terrible vitality and barked like a dog to warn and awaken the sleepers. He stopped, shuddering and dismayed, and fell back from tip-toes on his heels. He felt the arteries in his temples beat like two forge hammers, and it seemed to him that his breath issued from his lungs with the noise of the wind roaring out of a cavern. He fancied that the horrible clamour of this irritated hinge must have startled the whole house like the shock of an earthquake ; the door he opened had been alarmed and cried for help ; the old man would rise, the two aged females would shriek, and assistance would arrive within a quarter of an hour, the town would be astir, and the gendarmerie turned out. For a moment he believed himself lost.

He remained where he was, petrified like a statue of salt, and not daring to make a movement. A few minutes passed, during which the door remained wide open. He ventured to look into the room, and found that nothing had stirred. He listened ; no one was moving in the house, the creaking of the rusty hinge had not awakened any one. The first danger had passed, but still there was fearful tumult within him. But he did not recoil, he had not done so even when he thought himself lost ; he only thought of finishing the job as speedily as possible, and

entered the bedroom. The room was in a state of perfect calmness ; here and there might be distinguished confused and vague forms, which by day were papers scattered over the table, open folios, books piled on a sofa, an easy-chair covered with clothes, and a priedieu, all of which were at this moment only dark nooks and patches of white. Jean Valjean advanced cautiously and carefully, and avoided coming into collision with the furniture. He heard from the end of the room the calm and regular breathing of the sleeping Bishop. Suddenly he stopped, for he was close to the bed ; he had reached it sooner than he anticipated.

Nature at times blends her effects and spectacles with our actions, with a species of gloomy and intelligent design, as if wishing to make us reflect. For nearly half an hour a heavy cloud had covered the sky, but at the moment when Jean Valjean stopped at the foot of the bed, this cloud was rent asunder as if expressly, and a moonbeam passing through the tall window suddenly illumined the Bishop's pale face. He was sleeping peacefully, and was wrapped up in a long garment of brown wool, which covered his arms down to the wrists. His head was thrown back on the pillow in the easy attitude of repose, and his head, adorned with the pastoral ring, and which had done so many good deeds, hung out of bed. His entire face was lit up by a vague expression of satisfaction, hope, and beatitude—it was more than a smile and almost a radiance. He had on his forehead the inexpressible reflection of an invisible light, for the soul of a just man contemplates a mysterious heaven during sleep. A reflection of this heaven was cast over the Bishop, but it was at the same time a luminous transparency, for the heaven was within him, and was conscience.

At the moment when the moonbeam was cast over this internal light, the sleeping Bishop seemed to be surrounded by a glory, which was veiled, however, by an ineffable semi-light. The moon in the heavens, the slumbering landscape, the quiet house, the hour, the silence, the moment, added something solemn and in-

describable to this man's venerable repose, and cast a majestic and serene halo round his white hair and closed eyes, his face in which all was hope and confidence, his aged head, and his infantine slumbers. There was almost a divinity in this unconsciously august man. Jean Valjean was standing in the shadow with his crow-bar in his hand, motionless and terrified by this luminous old man. He had never seen anything like this before, and such confidence horrified him. The moral world has no greater spectacle than this, a troubled, restless conscience, which is on the point of committing a bad action, contemplating the sleep of a just man.

This sleep in such isolation, and with a neighbour like himself, possessed a species of sublimity which he felt vaguely, but imperiously. No one could have said what was going on within him, not even himself. In order to form any idea of it we must imagine what is the most violent in the presence of what is gentlest. Even in his face nothing could have been distinguished with certainty, for it displayed a sort of haggard astonishment. He looked at the Bishop, that was all, but what his thoughts were it would be impossible to divine; what was evident was, that he was moved and shaken, but of what nature was this emotion? His eye was not once removed from the old man, and the only thing clearly revealed by his attitude and countenance was a strange indecision. It seemed as if he were hesitating between two abysses, the one that saves and the one that destroys; he was ready to dash out the Bishop's brains or kiss his hand. At the expiration of a few minutes his left arm slowly rose to his cap, which he took off; then his arm fell again with the same slowness, and Jean Valjean recommenced his contemplation, with his cap in his left hand, his crow-bar in his right, and his hair standing erect on his savage head.

The Bishop continued to sleep peacefully beneath this terrific glance. A moonbeam rendered the crucifix over the mantelpiece dimly visible, which seemed to open its arms for both, with a blessing for one and a pardon

for the other. All at once Jean Valjean put on his cap again, then walked rapidly along the bed, without looking at the Bishop, and went straight to the cupboard. He raised his crow-bar to force the lock, but as the key was in it, he opened it, and the first thing he saw was the plate-basket, which he seized. He hurried across the room, not caring for the noise he made, re-entered the oratory, opened the window, seized his stick, put the silver in his pocket, threw away the basket, leaped into the garden, bounded over the wall like a tiger, and fled.

---

## CHAPTER X.

### THE BISHOP AT WORK.

THE next morning at sunrise Monseigneur Welcome was walking about the garden, when Madame Magloire came running toward him in a state of great alarm.

"Monseigneur, Monseigneur!" she screamed, "does your Grandeur know where the plate basket is?"

"Yes," said the Bishop.

"The Lord be praised," she continued; "I did not know what had become of it."

The Bishop had just picked up the basket in a flower-bed, and now handed it to Madame Magloire. "Here it is," he said.

"Well!" she said, "there is nothing in it; where is the plate?"

"Ah!" the Bishop replied, "it is the plate that troubles your mind. Well, I do not know where that is."

"Good Lord! it is stolen, and that man who came last night is the robber."

In a twinkling Madame Magloire had run to the oratory, entered the alcove, and returned to the Bishop. He was stooping down and looking sorrowfully at a cochlearia, whose stem the basket had broken. He raised himself on hearing Madame Magloire scream.—

"Monseigneur, the man has gone! the plate is stolen!"

While uttering this exclamation her eyes fell on a corner of the garden, where there were signs of climbing; the coping of the wall had been torn away.

"That is the way he went! he leaped into Cochefilet lane. Ah, what an abomination; he has stolen our plate!"

The Bishop remained silent for a moment, then raised his earnest eyes, and said gently to Madame Magloire,—

"By the way, was that plate ours?"

Madame Magloire was speechless; there was another interval of silence, after which the Bishop continued—

"Madame Magloire, I had wrongfully held back this silver, which belonged to the poor. Who was this person? evidently a poor man."

"Good gracious!" Madame Magloire continued; "I do not care for it, nor does Mademoiselle, but we feel for Monseigneur. With what will Monseigneur eat now?"

The Bishop looked at her in amazement. "Why, are there not pewter forks to be had?"

Madame Magloire shrugged her shoulders. "Pewter smells!"

"Then iron!"

Madame Magloire made an expressive grimace. "Iron tastes."

"Well, then," said the Bishop, "wood!"

A few minutes later he was breakfasting at the same table at which Jean Valjean sat on the previous evening. While breakfasting Monseigneur Welcome gaily remarked to his sister, who said nothing, and to Madame Magloire, who growled in a low voice, that spoon and fork, even of wood, are not required to dip a piece of bread in a cup of milk.

"What an idea!" Madame Magloire said, as she went backwards and forwards, "to receive a man like that, and lodge him by one's side. And what a blessing it is that he only stole! Oh, Lord! the mere thought makes a body shudder."

As the brother and sister were leaving the table there was a knock at the door.

"Come in," said the Bishop.

The door opened, and a strange and violent group appeared on the threshold. Three men were holding a fourth by the collar. The three men were gendarmes, the fourth was Jean Valjean. A corporal, who apparently commanded the party, came in and walked up to the Bishop with a military salute.

"Monseigneur," he said.

At this word Jean Valjean, who was gloomy and crushed, raised his head with a stupefied air.

"Monseigneur," he muttered; "then he is not the Curé."

"Silence!" said a gendarme. "This gentleman is Monseigneur the Bishop."

In the meanwhile Monseigneur Welcome had advanced as rapidly as his great age permitted.

"Ah! there you are," he said, looking at Jean Valjean. "I am glad to see you. Why, I gave you the candlesticks too, which are also silver, and will fetch you 200 francs. Why did you not take them away with the rest of the plate?"

Jean Valjean opened his eyes, and looked at the Bishop with an expression which no human language could render.

"Monseigneur," the corporal said, "what this man told us was true then? We met him, and as he looked as if he were running away, we arrested him. He had this plate——"

"And he told you," the Bishop interrupted, with a smile, "that it was given to him by an old priest at whose house he passed the night? I see it all. And you brought him back here? That is a mistake."

"In that case," the corporal continued, "we can let him go?"

"Of course," the Bishop answered.

The gendarmes loosed their hold of Jean Valjean, who tottered back.

"Is it true that I am at liberty?" he said, in an almost inarticulate voice, and as if speaking in his sleep.

"Yes, you are let go; don't you understand?" said a gendarme.

"My friend," the Bishop continued, "before you go take your candlesticks."

He went to the mantelpiece, fetched the two candlesticks, and handed them to Jean Valjean. The two females watched him do so without a word, without a sign, without a look that could disturb the Bishop. Jean Valjean was trembling in all his limbs; he took the candlesticks mechanically, and with wandering looks.

"Now," said the Bishop, "go in peace. By-the-bye, when you return, my friend, it is unnecessary to pass through the garden, for you can always enter, day and night, by the front door, which is only latched."

Then, turning to the gendarmes, he said,—

"Gentlemen, you can retire."

They did so. Jean Valjean looked as if he were on the point of fainting; the Bishop walked up to him, and said in a low voice,—

"Never forget that you have promised me to employ this money in becoming an honest man."

Jean Valjean, who had no recollection of having promised anything, stood silent. The Bishop, who had laid a stress on these words, continued solemnly,—

"Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to evil, but to good. I have bought your soul of you. I withdraw it from black thoughts and the spirit of perdition, and give it to God."

## CHAPTER XI.

### LITTLE GERVAIS.

JEAN VALJEAN left the town as if running away; he walked hastily across the fields, taking the roads and paths that offered themselves, without perceiving that he was going round and round. He wandered thus the



entire morning, and though he had eaten nothing, he did not feel hungry. He was attacked by a multitude of novel sensations; he felt a sort of passion, but he did not know with whom. He could not have said whether he was affected or humiliated; at times a strange softening came over him, against which he strove, and to which he opposed the hardening of the last twenty years. This condition offended him, and he saw with alarm that the species of frightful calmness, which the injustice of his misfortune had produced, was shaken within him. He asked himself what would take its place; at times he would have preferred being in prison and with the gendarmes, and that things had not happened thus; for that would have agitated him less. Although the season was advanced, there were still here and there in the hedges a few laggard flowers, whose smell recalled childhood's memories as he passed them. These recollections were almost unendurable, for it was so long since they had recurred to him.

Indescribable thoughts were thus congregated within him the whole day through. When the sun was setting, and lengthening on the ground the shadow of the smallest pebble, Jean Valjean was sitting behind a bush in a large tawny and utterly-deserted plain. There were only the Alps on the horizon, there was not even the steeple of a distant village. Jean Valjean might be about three leagues from D——, and a path that crossed the plain ran a few paces from the bushes. In the midst of this meditation, which would have contributed no little in rendering his rage formidable to any one who saw him, he heard a sound of mirth. He turned his head and saw a little Savoyard about ten years of age coming along the path, with his hurdy-gurdy at his side and his dormouse-box on his back. He was one of those gentle, merry lads who go about from country to country, displaying their knees through the holes in their trousers.

While singing the lad stopped every now and then to play at pitch and toss with some coins he held in his hand, which were probably his entire fortune. Among

these coins was a two-franc piece. The lad stopped by the side of the bushes without seeing Jean Valjean, and threw up the handful of sous, all of which he had hitherto always caught on the back of his hand. This time the two-franc piece fell, and rolled up to Jean Valjean, who placed his foot upon it. But the boy had looked after the coin, and seen him do it; he did not seem surprised, but walked straight up to the man. It was an utterly deserted spot; as far as eye could extend there was no one on the plain or the path. Nothing was audible, save the faint cries of a swarm of birds of passage passing through the sky, at an immense height. The boy had his back turned to the sun, which wove golden threads in his hair, and suffused Jean Valjean's face with a purpled, blood-red hue.

"Sir," the little Savoyard said, with that childish confidence which is composed of ignorance and innocence, "my coin?"

"What is your name?" Jean Valjean said.

"Little Gervais, sir."

"Be off," said Jean Valjean.

"Give me my coin, if you please, sir."

Jean Valjean hung his head, but said nothing.

The boy began again,—

"My two-franc piece, sir."

Jean Valjean's eye remained fixed on the ground.

"My coin," the boy cried, "my silver piece, my money."

It seemed as if Jean Valjean did not hear him, for the boy seized the collar of his blouse and shook him, and at the same time made an effort to remove the iron-shod shoe placed on his coin.

"I want my money, my forty-sous piece."

The boy began crying, and Jean Valjean raised his head. He was still sitting on the ground, and his eyes were misty. He looked at the lad with a sort of amazement, then stretched forth his hand to his stick, and shouted in a terrible voice, "Who is this?"

"I, sir," the boy replied. "Little Gervais. Give me back my two francs, if you please. Take away your

foot, sir, if you please." Then he grew irritated, though so little, and almost threatening.

"Come, will you remove your foot, I say?"

"Ah, it is you still," said Jean Valjean, and springing up, with his foot still held on the coin, he added, "Will you be off or not?"

The startled boy looked at him, then began trembling from head to foot, and after a few moments of stupor ran off at full speed, without daring to look back or utter a cry. Still, when he had got a certain distance, want of breath forced him to stop, and Jean Valjean could hear him sobbing. In a few minutes the boy had disappeared. The sun had set, and darkness collected around Jean Valjean. He had eaten nothing all day, and was probably in a fever. He had remained standing, and not changed his attitude since the boy ran off. His breath heaved his chest at long and unequal intervals, his eye, fixed ten or twelve yards ahead, seemed to be studying with profound attention the shape of an old fragment of blue earthenware which had fallen in the grass. Suddenly he started, for he felt the night chill; he pulled his cap over his forehead, mechanically tried to cross and button his blouse, made a step, and stooped to pick up his stick.

At this moment he perceived the two-franc piece, which his foot had half buried in the turf, and which glistened among the pebbles. It had the effect of a galvanic shock upon him. "What is this?" he muttered. He fell back three paces, then stopped, unable to take his eye from the spot his foot had trodden a moment before, as if the thing glistening there in the darkness had an open eye fixed upon him. In a few moments he dashed convulsively at the coin, picked it up, and began looking out into the plain, while shuddering like a straying wild beast which is seeking shelter.

He saw nothing, night was falling, the plain was cold and indistinct, and heavy violet mists rose in the twilight. He set out rapidly in a certain direction, the one in which the lad had gone. After going some thirty yards he stopped, looked and saw nothing; then he shouted

with all his strength, "Little Gervais, little Gervais!" He was silent, and waited, but there was no response. The country was deserted and gloomy, and he was surrounded by space. There was nothing but a gloom in which his glance was lost, and a silence in which his voice was lost. An icy breeze was blowing, and imparted to things around a sort of mournful life. The bushes shook their little thin arms with incredible fury; they seemed to be threatening and pursuing some one.

He walked onwards and then began running, but from time to time he stopped, and shouted in the solitude with a voice the most formidable and agonizing that can be imagined: "Little Gervais, little Gervais!" Assuredly, if the boy had heard him, he would have felt frightened, and not have shown himself; but the lad was doubtless a long way off by this time. The convict met a priest on horseback, to whom he went up and said,—

"Monsieur le Curé, have you seen a lad pass?"

"No," the Priest replied.

"A lad of the name of 'Little Gervais'?"

"I have seen nobody."

The convict took two five-franc pieces from his pouch and handed them to the Priest.

"Monsieur le Curé, this is for your poor. He was a boy of about ten years of age, with a dormouse, I think, and a hurdy-gurdy, a Savoyard, you know."

"I did not see him."

"Can you tell me if there is any one of the name of Little Gervais in the villages about here?"

"If it is as you say, my good fellow, the lad is a stranger. Many of them pass this way."

Jean Valjean violently took out two other five-franc pieces, which he gave to the Priest.

"For your poor," he said, then added wildly, "Monsieur l'Abbé, have me arrested: I am a robber."

The Priest urged on his horse, and rode away in great alarm, while Jean Valjean set off running in the direction he had first taken. He went on for a long distance, looking, calling, and shouting, but he met no one else.

Twice or thrice he ran across the plain to something that appeared to him to be a person lying or sitting down ; but he only found heather, or rocks level with the ground. At last he stopped at a spot where three paths met ; the moon had risen ; he called out for the last time, " Little Gervais, Little Gervais, Little Gervais ! " His shout died away in the mist, without even awakening an echo. He muttered again, " Little Gervais," in a weak and almost inarticulate voice, but it was his last effort. His knees suddenly gave way under him as if an invisible power were crushing him beneath the weight of a bad conscience. He fell exhausted on a large stone, with his hand tearing his hair, his face between his knees, and shrieked : " I am a scoundrel ! " Then his heart melted, and he began to weep ; it was the first time for nineteen years.

When Jean Valjean quitted the Bishop's house he was lifted out of his former thoughts, and could not account for what was going on within him. He stiffened himself against the angelic deeds and gentle words of the old man : " You have promised me to become an honest man. I purchase your soul ; I withdraw it from the spirit of perverseness, and give it to God." This incessantly recurred to him, and he opposed to this celestial indulgence that pride which is within us as the fortress of evil. He felt indistinctly that this priest's forgiveness was the greatest and most formidable assault by which he had yet been shaken ; that his hardening would be permanent if he resisted this clemency ; that if he yielded he must renounce that hatred with which the actions of other men had filled his soul during so many years, and which pleased him ; that this time he must either conquer or be vanquished, and that the struggle, a colossal and final struggle, had begun between his wickedness and that man's goodness.

In the presence of all these gleams he walked on like a drunken man. While he went on thus with haggard eye, had he any distinct perception of what the result of his adventure at D—— might be ? Did he hear all that

mysterious buzzing which warns or disturbs the mind at certain moments of life? Did a voice whisper in his ear that he had just gone through the solemn hour of his destiny, that no middle way was now left him, and that if he were not henceforth the best of men he would be the worst; that he must now ascend higher than the bishop, or sink lower than the galley-slave; that if he wished to be good he must become an angel, and if he wished to remain wicked that he must become a monster?

This last bad action had a decisive effect upon him: it suddenly darted through the chaos which filled his mind and dissipated it, placed on one side the dark mists, on the other the light, and acted on his soul, in its present condition, like certain chemical reagents act upon a troubled mixture, by precipitating one element and clarifying another. At first, before even examining himself or reflecting, he wildly strove to find the boy again and return him his money; then, when he perceived that this was useless and impossible, he stopped in despair. At the moment when he exclaimed, "I am a scoundrel!" he had seen himself as he really was, and was already so separated from himself that he fancied himself merely a phantom, and that he had there before him, in flesh and blood, his blouse fastened round his hips, his knapsack full of stolen objects on his back, with his resolute and gloomy face and his mind full of hideous schemes, the frightful galley-slave, Jean Valjean.

As we have remarked, excessive misfortune had made him to some extent a visionary, and this therefore was a species of vision. He really saw that Jean Valjean with his sinister face before him, and almost asked himself who this man who so horrified him was. His brain was in that violent and yet frightfully calm stage when the reverie is so deep that it absorbs reality. He contemplated himself, so to speak, face to face, and at the same time he saw through this hallucination a species of light which he at first took for a torch. On looking more attentively at this light which appeared to his conscience, he perceived that it had a human shape and was the Bishop. His con-

science examined in turn the two men standing before him, the Bishop and Jean Valjean. By one of those singular effects peculiar to an ecstasy of this nature, the more his reverie was prolonged, the taller and more brilliant the Bishop appeared, while Jean Valjean grew less and faded out of sight. At length he disappeared, and the Bishop alone remained, who filled the wretched man's soul with a magnificent radiance.

Jean Valjean wept for a long time, and sobbed with more weakness than a woman, more terror than a child. While he wept the light grew brighter in his brain, an extraordinary light, at once ravishing and terrible. His past life, his first fault, his long expiation, his external brutalization, his internal hardening, his liberation, accompanied by so many plans of vengeance, what had happened at the Bishop's, the last thing he had done, the robbery of the boy, a crime the more cowardly and monstrous because it took place after the Bishop's forgiveness—all this recurred to him, but in a light which he had never before seen. He looked at his life, and it appeared to him horrible; at his soul, and it appeared to him frightful. Still a soft light was shed over both, and he fancied that he saw Satan by the light of Paradise.

How many hours did he weep thus? what did he do afterwards? whither did he go? No one ever knew. It was stated, however, that on this very night the mail carrier from Genoble, who arrived at D—— at about 3 a.m., while passing through the street where the Bishop's Palace stood, saw a man kneeling on the pavement in the attitude of prayer in front of Monseigneur Welcome's door.

## BOOK III.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE YEAR 1817.

1817 is the year which Louis XVIII., with a certain royal coolness which was not deficient in pride, entitled the twenty-second of his reign. It is the year in which M. Bruguière de Sorsum was celebrated. All the wig-makers' shops, hoping for powder and the return of the royal bird, were covered with azure and *fleurs-de-lis*. It was the candid time when Count Lynch sate every Sunday as churchwarden at St. Germain-des-Près in the coat of a Peer of France, with his red ribbon, his long nose, and that majestic profile peculiar to a man who has done a brilliant deed. The brilliant deed done by M. Lynch was having, when Mayor of Bordeaux, surrendered the town rather prematurely on March 12, 1814, to the Duc d'Angoulême; hence his peerage. In 1817 fashion buried little boys of the age of six and seven beneath vast Morocco leather caps with ear-flaps, much resembling Esquimaux fur-bonnets. The French army was dressed in white, like the Austrian; the regiments were called Legions, and bore the names of the departments instead of numbers. Napoleon was at St. Helena, and as England refused him green cloth he had his old coats turned. In 1817 Pellegrini sang. and Mlle. Bigottini danced. Potier



reigned, and Odry was not as yet. Madame Saqui succeeded Forioso. There were still Prussians in France. M. Delalot was a personage. Legitimacy had just strengthened itself by cutting off the hand and then the head of Pleignier, Carbonneau, and Tolleron. Prince de Talleyrand, Lord High Chamberlain, and the Abbé Louis, Minister Designate of Finance, looked at each other with the laugh of two augurs. Both had celebrated on July 14, 1790, the Mass of the confederation in the Champ de Mars. Talleyrand had read it as bishop, Louis had served it as deacon. In 1817, in the side walks of the same Champ de Mars, could be seen large wooden cylinders, lying in the wet and rotting in the grass, painted blue, with traces of eagles and bees which had lost their gilding. These were the columns which two years previously supported the Emperor's balcony at the Champ de Mai. They were partly blackened by the bivouac fires of the Austrians encamped near Gros Caillou, and two or three of the columns had disappeared in the bivouac fires, and warmed the coarse hands of the Kaiserlichs. The Champ de Mai had this remarkable thing about it, that it was held in the month of June, and on the Champ de Mars. In this year, 1817, two things were popular, the Voltaire Touquet and the snuff-box *à la charte*. The latest Parisian sensation was the crime of Dautun, who threw his brother's head into the basin on the Flower Market. People were beginning to grow anxious at the Admiralty that no news arrived about that fatal frigate *La Meduse*, which was destined to cover Chaumareix with shame and Géricault with glory. Colonel Selves proceeded to Egypt to become Soliman Pacha there. The palace of the Thermes, in the Rue de la Harpe, served as a shop for a cooper. On the platform of the octagonal tower of the Hotel de Cluny could still be seen the small plank hut, which had served as an observatory for Messier, astronomer to the Admiralty under Louis XVI. The Duchesse de Daras was reading to three or four friends in her boudoir furnished with sky-blue satin X's, her unpublished romance of *Owrika*. The N.'s were scratched off the Louvre, the

## FANTINE.

Austerlitz bridge abdicated its name, and was called the King's Gardens' bridge—a double enigma which at once disguised the Austerlitz bridge and the Jardin des Plantes. Louis XVIII., while annotating Horace with his nail, was troubled by heroes who make themselves emperors and cobblers who make themselves dauphins; he had two objects of anxiety, Napoleon and Mathurin Bruneau. The French Academy offered as subject for the prize essay the happiness produced by study. M. Billart was officially eloquent; and in his shadow could be seen growing up that future Advocate-General de Broë, promised to the sarcasms of Paul Louis Courier. There was a false Châteaubriand called Marchangy, while waiting till there should be a false Marchangy, called D'Arlincourt. "Claire d'Albe" and "Malek Adel" were masterpieces; and Madame Cottin was declared the first writer of the age. The Institute erased from its lists the Academician Napoleon Bonaparte. A royal decree constituted Angoulême a naval school, for, as the Duc d'Angoulême was Lord High Admiral, it was evident that the city from which he derived his title possessed *de jure* all the qualifications of a seaport; if not, the monarchical principle would be encroached on. In the Council of Ministers the question was discussed whether the woodcuts representing tumblers, which seasoned Franconi's bills and caused the street scamps to congregate, should be tolerated. M. Paër, author of *L'Agnese*, a square-faced man with a carbuncle on his chin, directed the private concerts of the Marchioness de Sassenaye in the Rue de la Ville d'Évêque. All the young ladies were singing, "L'ermite de Saint Avelle," words by Edmond Géraud. The *Yellow Dwarf* was transformed into the *Mirror*. The Café Lemblin stood up for the Emperor against the Café Valois, which supported the Bourbons. The Duc de Berry, whom Louvel was already gazing at from the darkness, had just been married to a princess of Sicily. It was a year since Madame de Staël had died. The Life Guards hissed Mademoiselle Mars. The large papers were all small; their size was limited, but the liberty was great. The

'*Constitutionnel* was constitutional, and the *Minerva* called Châteaubriand, Châteaubriant ; this *t* made the city laugh heartily, at the expense of the great writer. Prostituted journalists insulted in sold journals the proscriptions of 1815. David had no longer any talent, Arnault any wit, Carnot any probity. Soult never gained a battle. It is true that Napoleon was no longer a genius. Everybody knows that it is rare for letters sent by post to reach an exile, for the police make it a religious duty to intercept them. The fact is not new, for Descartes when banished complained of it. David having displayed some temper in a Belgian paper at not receiving letters written to him, this appeared very amusing to the Royalist journals, which ridiculed the proscribed man. The use of the words regicides or voters, enemies or allies, Napoleon or Bonaparte, separated two men more than an abyss. All persons of common sense were agreed that the era of revolutions was eternally closed by Louis XVIII., surnamed "the immortal author of the Charter." On the platform of the Pont Neuf the word "*Redivivus*" was carved on the pedestal which was awaiting the statue of Henry IV.

Traitors displayed themselves unblushingly ; some, who had passed over to the enemy on the eve of a battle, did not conceal their reward, but walked immodestly in the sunshine with the cynicism of wealth and dignities ; the deserters at Ligny and Quatre Bras, well rewarded for their turpitude, openly displayed their monarchical devotion.

Such are a few recollections of the year 1817, which is now forgotten. History neglects nearly all these details, and cannot do otherwise, as the infinity would crush it. Still, these details, wrongly called little—there are no little facts in humanity, or little leaves in vegetation—are useful, for the face of ages is composed of the physiognomy of years.

In this year 1817 four young Parisians played a capital joke.

## FANTINE.

### CHAPTER II.

#### A DOUBLE QUARTETTE.

THESE Parisians came, one from Toulouse, the second from Limoges, the third from Cahors, the fourth from Montauban, but they were students, and thus Parisians; for studying in Paris is being born in Paris. These young men were insignificant, four every-day specimens, neither good nor bad, wise nor ignorant, geniuses nor idiots, and handsome with that charming April, which is called twenty years. They were four Oscars, for at that period Arthurs did not yet exist. "Burn for him the perfumes of Araby," the romance said; "Oscar is advancing, I am about to see him." People had just emerged from Ossian: the elegant world was Scandinavian and Caledonian, the English style was not destined to prevail till a later date, and the first of the Arthurs, Wellington, had only just won the battle of Waterloo.

The names of these Oscars were Felix Tholomyès, Listolier, Fameuil, and Blachevelle. Of course each had a mistress: Blachevelle loved Favorite, so called because she had been to England; Listolier adored Dahlia, who had taken the name of a flower for her *nom de guerre*; Fameuil idolized Zephine, an abridgment of Josephine; while Tholomyès had Fantine, called the Blonde, owing to her magnificent sun-coloured hair. Favorite, Dahlia, Zephine, and Fantine were four exquisitely pretty girls, still to some extent workwomen. They had not entirely laid down the needle, and though deranged by their amourettes, they still had in their faces a remnant of the serenity of toil, and in their souls that flower of honesty which in a woman survives the first fall. One of the four was called the young one, because she was the youngest, and one called the old one, who was only three-and-twenty. To conceal nothing, the three first were more experienced, more reckless, and had flown further into

the noise of life than Fantine the Blonde, who was still occupied with her first illusion.

Dahlia, Zephine, and especially Favorite, could not have said the same. There was already more than one episode in their scarce-begun romance, and the lover who was called Adolphe in the first chapter, became Alphonse in the second, and Gustave in the third. Poverty and coquettishness are two fatal counsellors: one scolds, the other flatters, and the poor girls of the lower classes have them whispering in both ears. Badly-guarded souls listen, and hence come the falls they make, and the stones hurled at them. They are crushed with the splendour of all that is immaculate and inaccessible. Alas! was the Jungfrau ever starving? Favorite, who had been to England, was admired by Zephine and Dahlia. She had a home of her own from an early age. Her father was an old brutal and boasting professor of mathematics, unmarried, and still giving lessons in spite of his age. This professor, when a young man, had one day seen a lady's maid's gown caught in a fender; he fell in love with this accident, and Favorite was the result. She met her father from time to time, and he bowed to her. One morning, an old woman with a hypocritical look came into her room, and said, "Do you not know me, miss?" "No." "I am your mother." Then the old woman opened the cupboard, ate and drank, sent for a mattress she had, and installed herself. This mother, who was grumbling and proud, never spoke to Favorite, sat for hours without saying a word, breakfasted, dined, and supped for half a dozen, and spent her evenings in the porter's lodge, where she abused her daughter. What drew Dahlia towards Listolier, towards others perhaps, towards idleness, was having too pretty pink nails. How could she employ such nails in working? a girl who wishes to remain virtuous must not have pity on her hands. As for Zephine, she had conquered Fameuil by her little saucy and coaxing way of saying "Yes, Sir." The young men were comrades, the girls friends. Such amours are always doubled by such friendships.

A sage and a philosopher are two persons ; and what proves it is that, after making all reservations for these little irregular households, Favorite, Zephine, and Dahlia were philosophic girls, and Fantine a prudent girl. Prudent, it will be said, and Tholomyès ? Solomon would reply, that love forms part of wisdom. We confine ourselves to saying that Fantine's love was a first love, a single love, a faithful love. She was the only one of the four who was addressed familiarly by one man alone.

Fantine was one of those beings who spring up from the dregs of the people ; issuing from the lowest depths of the social darkness, she had on her forehead the stamp of the anonymous and the unknown. She was born at M. sur M. ; of what parents ? who could say ? she had never known either father or mother. She called herself Fantine, and why Fantine ? she was never known by any other name. At the period of her birth, the Directory was still in existence. She had no family name, as she had no family ; and no Christian name, as the Church was abolished. She accepted the name given her by the first passer-by, who saw her running barefooted about the streets. She was called little Fantine, and no one knew any more. This human creature came into the world in that way. At the age of ten, Fantine left the town, and went into service with farmers in the neighbourhood. At the age of fifteen she went to Paris, " to seek her fortune." Fantine was pretty, and remained pure as long as she could. She was a charming blonde, with handsome teeth ; she had gold and pearls for her dower, but the gold was on her head, and the pearls in her mouth.

She worked for a livelihood ; and then she loved, still for the sake of living, for the heart is hungry too. She loved Tholomyès ; it was a pastime for him, but a passion with her. The streets of the Quartier Latin, which are thronged with students and grisettes, saw the beginning of this dream. Fantine, in the labyrinth of the Pantheon Hill, where so many adventures are fastened and unfastened, long shunned Tholomyès, but in such a way as

to meet him constantly. There is a manner of avoiding which resembles seeking—in a word, the eclogue was played.

Blacheville, Listolier, and Fameuil formed a sort of group, of which Tholomyès was the head, for it was he who had the wit. Tholomyès was the antique old student; he was rich, for he had an income of 4,000 francs a year, a splendid scandal on the Montagne St. Geneviève. Tholomyès was a man of the world, thirty years of age, and in a bad state of preservation. He was wrinkled and had lost teeth, and he had an incipient baldness, of which himself said without sorrow: "The skull at thirty, the knee at forty." He had but a poor digestion, and one of his eyes was permanently watery. But in proportion as his youth was extinguished, his gaiety became brighter; he substituted jests for his teeth, joy for his hair, irony for his health, and his weeping eye laughed incessantly. He was battered, but still flowering. His youth had beaten an orderly retreat, and only the fire was visible. He had had a piece refused at the Vaudeville Theatre, and wrote occasional verses now and then. In addition, he doubted everything in a superior way, which is a great strength in the eyes of the weak. Hence, being ironical and bald, he was the leader. We wonder whether irony is derived from the English word "iron"? One day Tholomyès took the other three aside, made an oracular gesture, and said,—

"It is nearly a year that Fantine, Dahlia, Zephine, and Favorite have been asking us to give them a surprise, and we promised solemnly to do so. They are always talking about it, especially to me. In the same way as the old women of Naples cry to Saint Januarius, 'Yellow face, perform your miracle!' our beauties incessantly say to me, 'Tholomyès, when will you be delivered of your surprise?' At the same time our parents are writing to us, so let us kill two birds with one stone. The moment appears to me to have arrived, so let us talk it over."

Upon this, Tholomyès lowered his voice, and mysteriously uttered something so amusing that a mighty and

enthusiastic laugh burst from four mouths simultaneously and Blachevelle exclaimed, "That is an idea!" An *estaminet* full of smoke presenting itself, they went in, and the remainder of their conference was lost in the tobacco clouds. The result of the gloom was a brilliant pleasure excursion, that took place on the following Sunday, to which the four young men invited the girls.

---

## CHAPTER III.

## FOUR TO FOUR.

It is difficult to form an idea at the present day of what a pleasure party of students and grisettes was four-and-forty years ago. Paris has no longer the same environs; the face of what may be termed circum-Parisian life has completely changed during half a century; where there was the coucou, there is a railway-carriage; where there was the fly-boat, there is now the steamer; people talk of Fécamp as people did in those days of St. Cloud. Paris of 1862 is a city which has France for its suburbs.

The four couples conscientiously accomplished all the rustic follies possible at that day. It was a bright, warm summer day; they rose at five o'clock; then they went to St. Cloud in the stage coach, looked at the dry cascade and exclaimed, "That must be grand when there is water;" breakfasted at the Tête Noire, where Castaing had not yet put up, ran at the ring in the Quincunx of the great basin, ascended into the Diogenes lanthorn, gambled for macaroons at the roulette board by the Sèvres bridge, culled posies at Puteaux, bought reed-pipes at Neuilly, ate apple tarts everywhere, and were perfectly happy. The girls prattled and chattered like escaped linnets; they were quite wild, and every now and then gave the young men little taps. Oh youthful intoxication of life! adorable years! the wing of the dragon-fly rustles. Oh, whoever you may be, do you remember? have you ever



walked in the woods, removing the branches for the sake of the pretty head that comes behind you? have you laughingly stepped on a damp slope, with a beloved woman who holds your hand, and cries, "Oh, my boots, what a state they are in!" Let us say at once, that the merry annoyance of a shower was spared the happy party, although Favorite had said on starting, with a magisterial and maternal air, "The slugs are walking about the paths; that is a sign of rain, children."

All four were pretty madcaps. A good old classic poet then renowned, M. le Chevalier de Labouisse, a worthy man who had an Eléanore, wandering that day under the chestnut-trees of St. Cloud, saw them pass at about ten in the morning, and exclaimed, "There is one too many:" he was thinking of the Graces. Favorite, the girl who was three-and-twenty and the old one, ran in front under the large green branches, leapt over ditches, strode madly across bushes, and presided over the gaiety with the spirit of a young fawn. Zephine and Dahlia, whom accident had created as a couple necessary to enhance each other's beauty by contrast, did not separate, though more through a coquettish instinct than through friendship, and leaning on one another, assumed English attitudes; the first Keepsakes had just come out, melancholy was in vogue for women, as Byronism was at a later date for men, and the hair of the tender sex was beginning to become dishevelled. Zephine and Dahlia had their hair in rolls. Listolier and Fameuil, who were engaged in a discussion about their professors, were explaining to Fantine the difference there was between M. Delvincourt and M. Blondeau. Blachevelle seemed to have been created expressly to carry Favorite's dingy, shabby shawl on Sundays.

Tholomyès came last; he was very gay, but there was something dictatorial in his joviality; his principal ornament was nankeen trousers, cut in the shape of elephant's legs, with leathern straps; he had a mighty rattan worth 200 francs in his hand, and, as he was quite reckless, a strange thing called a cigar in his mouth;

nothing being sacred to him, he smoked. "That Tholomyès is astounding," the others were wont to say with veneration; "what trousers! what energy!"

As for Fantine, she was the personification of joy. Her splendid teeth had evidently been made for laughter by nature. She carried in her hand, more willingly than on her head, her little straw bonnet, with its long streamers. Her thick, light hair, inclined to float, and which had to be done up continually, seemed made for the flight of Galatea under the willows. Her rosy lips prattled enchantingly; the corners of her mouth voluptuously raised, as in the antique masks of Erigone, seemed to encourage boldness; but her long eyelashes, full of shade, were discreetly lowered upon the seductiveness of the lower part of the face, as if to command respect. Her whole toilet had something flaming about it; she had on a dress of mauve barège, little buskin slippers, whose strings formed an X on her fine, open-worked stockings, and that sort of muslin spencer, a Marseillais invention, whose name of *canezou*, a corrupted pronunciation of *quince Août* at the Cannebière, signifies fine weather and heat. The three others, who were less timid, as we said, bravely wore low-necked dresses, which in summer are very graceful and attractive, under bonnets covered with flowers; but by the side of this bold dress, Fantine's *canezou*, with its transparency, indiscretion, and reticences, at once concealing and displaying, seemed a provocative invention of decency; and the famous court of Love, presided over by the Vicomtesse de Cette with the sea-green eyes, would have probably bestowed the prize for coquettishness on this *canezou*, which competed for that of chastity. The simplest things are frequently the cleverest.

Dazzling from a front view, delicate from a side view, with dark blue eyes, heavy eyelids, arched and small feet, wrists and ankles admirably set on, the white skin displaying here and there the azure arborescences of the veins, with a childish fresh cheek, the robust neck of the Æginetan Juno, shoulders, apparently modelled by

Coustou, and having in their centre a voluptuous dimple, visible through the muslin; a gaiety tempered by reverie; a sculptural and exquisite being—such was Fantine; you could trace beneath the ribbons and finery a statue, and inside the statue a soul. Fantine was beautiful, without being exactly conscious of it. Those rare dreamers, the mysterious priests of the beautiful, who silently confront everything with perfection, would have seen in this little work-girl the ancient sacred euphony, through the transparency of Parisian grace! This girl had blood in her, and had those two descriptions of beauty which are the style and the rhythm. The style is the form of the ideal; the rhythm is its movement.

We have said that Fantine was joy itself; she was also modesty. Any one who watched her closely would have seen through all this intoxication of youth, the season, and love, an invincible expression of restraint and modesty. She remained slightly astonished, and this chaste astonishment distinguishes Psyche from Venus. Fantine had the long, white, delicate fingers of the Vestal, who stirs up the sacred fire with a golden bodkin. Though she had refused nothing, as we shall soon see, to Tholomyès, her face, when in repose, was supremely virginal; a species of stern and almost austere dignity suddenly invaded it at certain hours, and nothing was so singular and affecting as to see gaiety so rapidly extinguished on it, and contemplation succeed cheerfulness without any transition. This sudden gravity, which was at times sternly marked, resembled the disdain of a goddess. Her forehead, nose, and chin offered that equilibrium of outline which is very distinct from the equilibrium of proportion, and produces the harmony of the face; in the characteristic space between the base of the nose and the upper lip, she had that imperceptible and charming curve, that mysterious sign of chastity, which made Barbarossa fall in love with a Diana found in the ruins of Iconium. Love is a fault; be it so; but Fantine was innocence floating on the surface of the fault.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THOLOMYÈS SINGS A SPANISH SONG.

THE whole of this day seemed to be composed of dawn : all nature seemed to be having a holiday, and laughing. The pastures of St. Cloud exhaled perfumes ; the breeze from the Seine vaguely stirred the leaves ; the branches gesticulated in the wind ; the bees were plundering the jessamine ; a madcap swarm of butterflies settled down on the ragwort, the clover, and the wild oats ; there was in the august park of the King of France a pack of vagabonds, the birds. The four happy couples enjoyed the sun, the fields, the flowers, and the trees. And in this community of Paradise, three of the girls, while singing, talking, dancing, chasing butterflies, picking bindweed, wetting their stockings in the tall grass, fresh, madcap, but not dissolute, received kisses from all in turn. Fantine alone was shut up in her vague, dreamy resistance, and loved. " You always look strange," Favorite said to her.

After breakfast the four couples went to see, in what was then called the King's Square, a plant newly arrived from the Indies, whose name we have forgotten, but which at that time attracted all Paris to St. Cloud ; it was a strange and pretty shrub, whose numerous branches, fine as threads and leafless, were covered with a million of small white flowers ; there was always a crowd round it, admiring it. After inspecting the shrub, Tholomyès exclaimed, " I will pay for donkeys ; " and after making a bargain with the donkey man, they returned by Vauvres and Issy. At the latter place an incident occurred. The park, a national estate held at this time by Bourguin the contractor, was accidentally open. They passed through the gates, visited the wax hermit in his grotto, and tried the mysterious effect of the famous cabinet of mirrors, a lascivious trap, worthy of a satyr who had become a millionaire. They bravely pulled the large swing, fastened to the two chestnut trees celebrated by the Abbé

de Bernis. While swinging the ladies in turn, which produced, amid general laughter, a flying of skirts, by which Greuze would have profited, the Toulousian Tholomyès, who was somewhat of a Spaniard, as Toulouse is the cousin of Tolosa, sang to a melancholy tune, the old gallega, which was probably inspired by the sight of a pretty girl swinging between two trees,—

Soy de Badajoz  
Amor me llama  
Toda mi alma  
Es en mis ojos  
Porque enseñás  
A tus piernas.

Fantine alone declined to swing.

"I do not like people to be so affected," Favorite muttered rather sharply.

On giving up the donkeys there was fresh pleasure; the Seine was crossed in a boat, and from Passy they walked to the Barrière de l'Etoile. They had been afoot since five in the morning; but no matter! "There is no such thing as weariness on Sunday," said Favorite; "on Sundays fatigue does not work." At about three o'clock, the four couples, wild with delight, turned into the Montagnes Russes, a singular building, which at that time occupied the heights of Beaujon, and whose winding line could be seen over the trees of the Champs Elysées. From time to time Favorite exclaimed,—

"Where's the surprise? I insist on the surprise."

"Have patience," Tholomyès answered.

## CHAPTER V.

### AT BOMBARDA'S.

THE Russian mountain exhausted, they thought about dinner, and the radiant eight, at length somewhat weary, put into the Cabaret Bombarda, an off-shoot established

in the Champs Elysées by that famous restaurateur Bombarda, whose sign could be seen at that time at the Rue de Rivoli by the side of the Delorme passage.

A large, but ugly room, with an alcove and a bed at the end (owing to the crowded state of the houses on Sundays they were compelled to put up with it); two windows from which the quay and river could be contemplated through the elm-trees; a magnificent autumn sun illuminating the windows; two tables, on one of them a triumphal mountain of bottles, mixed up with hats and bonnets, at the other one four couples joyously seated round a mass of dishes, plates, bottles, and glasses, pitchers of beer, mingled with wine bottles; but little order on the table, and some amount of disorder under it.

Ils faisaient sous la table  
Un bruit, un trique-trac de pieds épouvantable,"

as Molière says. Such was the state of the pastoral which began at 5 a.m.; at half-past 4 p.m. the sun was declining and appetite was satisfied.

The Champs Elysées, full of sunshine and crowd, were nought but light and dust, two things of which glory is composed. The horses of Marly, those neighing marbles, reared amid a golden cloud. Carriages continually passed along; a squadron of splendid guards, with the trumpeter at their head, rode down the Neuilly avenue; the white flag, tinged with pink by the setting sun, floated above the dome of the Tuileries. The Place de la Concorde, which had again become the Place Louis XV. was crowded with merry promenaders. Many wore a silver *fleur-de-lis* hanging from a black moiré ribbon, which, in 1817, had not entirely disappeared from the buttonholes. Here and there, in the midst of applauding crowds, little girls were singing a royalist *bourrée*, very celebrated at that time, intended to crush the hundred days, and which had a chorus of—

"Rendez nous notre père de Gand,  
Rendez vous notre père."

Love talk and table talk are equally indescribable, for the first is a cloud, the second smoke. Fantine and Dahlia were humming a tune, Tholomyès was drinking, Zephine laughing, Fantine smiling, Listolier was blowing a penny trumpet bought at St. Cloud, Favorite was looking tenderly at Blachevelle and saying,—

"Blachevelle, I adore you."

This led to Blachevelle asking,—

"What would you do, Favorite, if I ceased to love you?"

"I?" Favorite exclaimed, "oh, do not say that, even in fun! if you ceased to love me, I would run after you, claw you, throw water over you, and have you arrested."

Blachevelle smiled with the voluptuous fatuity of a man whose self-esteem is tickled. Dahlia, while still eating, whispered to Favorite through the noise,—

"You seem to be very fond of your Blachevelle?"

"I detest him," Favorite answered in the same key, as she seized her fork again. "He is miserly, and I prefer the little fellow who lives opposite to me. He is a very good-looking young man; do you know him? It is easy to see that he wants to be an actor, and I am fond of actors. So soon as he comes in, his mother says, 'Oh, good heavens, my tranquillity is destroyed: he is going to begin to shout; my dear boy, you give me a headache;' because he goes about the house, into the garrets as high as he can get, and sings and declaims, so that he can be heard from the streets! He already earns 20 sous a day in a lawyer's office. He is the son of an ex-chorister at St. Jacques du Haut pas. Ah! he adores me to such a pitch that one day when he saw me making batter for pancakes, he said to me, 'Mamselle, make fritters of your gloves, and I will eat them.' Only professional men are able to say things like that. Ah! he is very good-looking, and I feel as if I am about to fall madly in love with the little fellow. No matter, I tell Blachevelle that I adore him: what a falsehood, eh, what a falsenood!"

After a pause, Favorite continued,—

"Dahlia, look you, I am sad. It has done nothing but rain all the summer: the wind annoys me, Blachevelle is excessively mean, there are hardly any green peas in the market, one does not know what to eat; I have the spleen, as the English say, for butter is so dear, and then it is horrifying that we are dining in a room with a bed in it, and that disgusts me with life."

At length, when all were singing noisily, or talking all together, Tholomyès interfered.

"Let us not talk haphazard or too quickly," he exclaimed, "we must meditate if we desire to be striking; too much improvisation stupidly empties the mind. Gentlemen, no haste; let us mingle majesty with our gaiety, eat contemplatively, and let *festina lentè* be our rule. We must not hurry. Look at the Spring; if it goes ahead too fast it is floored—that is to say, nipped by frost. Excessive zeal ruins the peach and apricot trees; excessive zeal kills the grace and joy of good dinners. No zeal, gentlemen; Grimaud de la Reynière is of the same opinion as Talleyrand."

A dull rebellion broke out in the party.

"Tholomyès, leave us at peace," said Blachevelle.

"Down with the tyrant," said Fameuil.

"Sunday exists," Listolier added.

"We are sober," Fameuil remarked again.

"Tholomyès," said Blachevelle, "regard my calmness" (*mon calme*).

"You are the Marquis of that ilk," Tholomyès replied. This poor pun produced the effect of a stone thrown into a pond. The Marquis de Montcalm was a celebrated Royalist at that day. All the frogs were silent.

"My friends," Tholomyès shouted with the accent of a man who is recapturing his empire, "recover yourself: too great stupor should not greet this pun which has fallen from the clouds, for everything that falls in such a manner is not necessarily worthy of enthusiasm and respect. Far be from me to insult puns: I honour them according to their deserts, and no more. All the most august, sublime, and charming members of humanity



have made puns : as, for instance, *Æschylus* on *Poly-nices*, and *Cleopatra* on *Octavius*. And note the fact that *Cleopatra's* pun preceded the battle of *Actium*, and that, were it not for that pun, no one would know the town of *Toryne*, a Greek word signifying a pot-ladle. This granted, I return to my exhortation. Brethren, I repeat, no zeal, no row, no excess, not even in puns, fun, and playing upon words. I recommend you to moderation in your desires. As truly as my name is *Felix Tholomyès*, I am speaking the truth. Happy the man who when the hour has struck, forms an heroic resolve, and abdicates like *Sylla* or *Origen*."

Favorite was listening with profound 'attention. "Felix!" she said, "what a pretty name; I like it. It is Latin, and means prosperous."

Tholomyès continued :

"Gentlemen, be suspicious of women; woe to the man who surrenders himself to a woman's fickle heart; woman is perfidious and tortuous, and detests the serpent through a professional jealousy."

"Tholomyès," Blachevelle shouted, "you are drunk."

"I hope so!"

"Then be jolly."

"I am agreeable," Tholomyès answered. And filling his glass, he rose.

"Glory to wine! *nunc te, Bacche, canam!* Pardon, ladies, that is Spanish, and the proof, *Señoras*, is this; as the country is, so is the measure. The arroba of Castille contains sixteen quarts, the cantaro of Alicante twelve, the almuda of the Canary Isles twenty-five, the cuartino of the Balearic Isles twenty-six, and Czar Peter's boot thirty. Long live the Czar who was great, and his boot which was greater still! Ladies, take a friend's advice; deceive your neighbour, if you think proper. The peculiarity of love is to wander, and it is not made to crouch like an English servant girl who has stiff knees from scrubbing. It is said that error is human, but I say, error is amorous. Ladies, I idolize you all. O Zephine, you with your seductive face, you

would be charming were you not all askew ; your face looks for all the world as if it had been sat upon by mistake. As for Favorite, O ye Nymphs and Muses ! one day when Blachevelle was crossing the gutter in the Rue Guérin-Boisseau, he saw a pretty girl with white, well-drawn-up stockings, who displayed her legs. The prelude was pleasing, and Blachevelle fell in love ; the girl he loved was Favorite. O Favorite, you have Ionian lips ; there was a Greek painter of the name of Euphorion, who was christened the painter of lips, and this Greek alone would be worthy to paint your mouth. Listen to me : before you there was not a creature deserving of the name ; you are made to receive the apple like Venus, or to eat it like Eve. Beauty begins with you, and you deserve a patent for inventing a pretty woman. You alluded to my name just now : it affected me deeply, but we must be distrustful of names, for they may be deceptive. My name is Felix, and yet I am not happy. Let us not blindly accept the indications they give us ; it would be a mistake to write to Liege for corks, or to Pau for gloves.\* Miss Dahlia, in your place I would call myself Rose, for a flower ought to smell agreeably, and a woman have spirit. I say nothing of Fantine, for she is a dreamer, pensive and sensitive ; she is a phantom, having the form of a nymph, and the modesty of a nun, who has strayed into the life of a grisette, but takes shelter in illusions, and who sings, prays, and looks at the blue sky, without exactly knowing what she sees or what she does, and who, with her eyes fixed on heaven, wanders about a garden in which there are more birds than ever existed. O Fantine, beware of this fact : I, Tholomyès, am an illusion—why the fair girl of chimeras is not even listening to me ! All about her is freshness, suavity, youth, and sweet morning brightness. O Fantine, girl worthy to be called Margaret or Pearl, you are a woman worthy of the fairest East. Ladies, here is a second piece of advice : do not marry, for marriage is a risk, and you had better shun it. But

\* An untranslatable pun based on *chêne-léger* and *peau*.

nonsense ! I am wasting my words ! girls are incurable about wedlock ; and all that we sages may say will not prevent waistcoat-makers and shoe-binders from dreaming of husbands loaded with diamonds. Well, beauties, be it so : but bear this in mind, you eat too much sugar. You have only one fault, O women, and that is nibbling sugar. O rodent sex, your pretty little white teeth adore sugar. Now listen to this, sugar is a salt, and salts are of a drying nature, and sugar is the most drying of all salts. It pumps out the fluidity of the blood through the veins ; this produces first coagulation and then solidifying of the blood ; from this comes tubercles in the lungs, and thence death. Hence do not nibble sugar, and you will live. I now turn to my male hearers : Gentlemen, make conquests. Rob one another of your well-beloved ones remorselessly ; change partners, for in love there are no friends. Whenever there is a pretty woman, hostilities are opened ; there is no quarter, but war to the knife ! a pretty woman is a *casus belli* and a flagrant offence. All the invasions of history were produced by petticoats ; for woman is the lawful prey of man. Romulus carried off the Sabine women. William raped the Saxon women, and Cæsar ravished the Roman women. A man who is not loved soars like a vulture over the mistresses of other men : and for my part, I offer all these unfortunate widowers Bonaparte's sublime proclamation to the army of Italy : 'Soldiers, you want for everything, the enemy possesses it.'

Here Tholomyès broke off.

"Take a breather, my boy," said Blachevelle.

At the same time the other three gentlemen struck up to a doleful air one of those studio-songs, which are composed extemporaneously, either in rhyme or prose, which spring up from the smoke of pipes, and fly away with it. The song was not adapted to calm Tholomyès' inspiration ; hence he emptied his glass, filled it again, and began once more.

"Down with wisdom ! forget all I have said to you. Be neither prudish, nor prudent, nor *prud'hommes*. "

drink the health of jollity: so let us be jolly. Let us complete our legal studies by folly and good food, for indigestion should run in a curricle with digests. Let Justinian be the male and merriment the female! Live, O creation; the world is one large diamond; I am happy, and the birds are astounding. What a festival all around us; the nightingale is a gratis Elleviou. Summer, I salute thee. O Luxembourg! O ye Georgics of the Rue Madame and the Allée de l'Observatoire! O ye dreaming lobsters! O ye delicious nurses, who, while taking care of children, fancy what your own will be like! the Pampas of America would please me if I had not the arcades of the Odeon. My soul is flying away to the Virgin forests and the Savannahs. All is glorious: the flies are buzzing in the light; the sun has sneezed forth the humming-bird. Kiss me, Fantine!

He made a mistake and kissed Favorite.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE DEATH OF A HORSE.

"It is a better dinner at Edon's than at Bombarda's," Zephine exclaimed.

"I prefer Bombarda," Blachevelle declared, "there is more luxury: it is more Asiatic. Just look at the dining-room with its mirrors: look at the knives, they are silver-handled here and bone at Edon's; now, silver is more precious than bone."

"Excepting for those persons who have a silver chin," Tholomyès observed.

He was looking at this moment at the dome of the Invalides which was visible from Bombarda's window. There was a pause, after which Tholomyès continued:

"I consent to live: all is not finished in the world. Since men can still be unreasonable, I return thanks to the immortal gods. Men lie, but they laugh: they

affirm, but they doubt: and something unexpected issues from the syllogism. This is grand: there are still in the world human beings who can joyously open and shut the puzzle-box of paradox. This wine, ladies, which you are drinking so calmly is Madeira, you must know, grown at Coural das Freiras, which is three hundred and seventeen *toises* above the sea level. Attention while drinking! three hundred and seventeen *toises*, and M. Bombarda, the magnificent restaurateur, lets you have these three hundred and seventeen *toises* for four francs, fifty centimes."

Tholomyès drained his glass and then continued:

"Honour to Bombarda! he would be equal to Memphis of Elephantia if he could ladle me up an Almeh, and to Thygelion of Cheronea if he could procure me an Hetæra! for, ladies, there were Bombardas in Greece and Egypt, as Apuleius teaches us. Alas! ever the same thing and nothing new: nothing is left unpublished in the creation of the Creator. 'Nothing new under the sun,' says Solomon: *amor omnibus idem*, and Carabine gets into the St. Cloud fly-boat with Carabin, just as Aspasia embarked with Pericles aboard the Samos fleet. One last word: Do you know who Aspasia was, ladies? Although she lived at a time when women had no soul, she was a soul: a soul of a pink and purple hue, hotter than fire, and fresher than the dawn. Aspasia was a woman in whom the two extremes of femininity met: she was a Socrates *plus* a Manon Lescaut."

Tholomyès, when started, would hardly have been checked, had not a horse fallen in the street at this very moment. Through the shock, cart and orator stopped short. It was a Beauce mare, old and lean and worthy of the knacker, dragging a very heavy cart. On getting in front of Bombarda's, the beast, exhausted and worn out, refused to go any further, and this incident produced a crowd. The carter, swearing and indignant, had scarce time to utter with the suitable energy the sacramental word, "Cur!" backed up by a pitiless lash, ere the poor beast fell, never to rise again. Tholomyès' gay hearers

turned their heads away on noticing the confusion, while he wound up his speech by the following sad strophe,—

“ Elle était de ce monde où coucou et carrosses,  
Ont le même destin,  
Et, rosse, ella a vécu ce que vivent les rosses,  
L'espace d'un : Mâtin ! ”

“ Poor horse ! ” Fantine said with a sigh ; and Dahlia shouted :

“ Why, here is Fantine beginning to feel pity for horses : how can she be such a fool ? ”

At this moment, Favorite crossed her arms and threw her head back ; she then looked boldly at Tholomyès, and said :

“ Well, how about the surprise ? ”

“ That is true, the hour has arrived,” Tholomyès answered. “ Gentlemen, it is time to surprise the ladies. Pray wait for us a moment.”

“ It begins with a kiss,” said Blachevelle.

“ On the forehead,” Tholomyès added.

Each solemnly kissed the forehead of his mistress : then they proceeded to the door in Indian file, with a finger on their lips. Favorite clapped her hands as they went out.

“ It is amusing already,” she said.

“ Do not be long,” Fantine murmured, “ we are waiting for you.”

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE JOYOUS END OF JOY.

THE girls, when left alone, leant out of the windows, two by two, talking, looking out, and wondering. They watched the young men leave the Bombarda cabaret arm in arm ; they turned round, made laughing signs, and disappeared in that dusty Sunday mob which once a week invaded the Champs Elysées.

"Do not be long," Fantine cried.

"What will they bring us?" said Zephine.

"I am certain it will be pretty," said Dahlia.

"For my part," Favorite added, "I hope it will be set in gold."

They were soon distracted by the movement on the quay, which they could notice through the branches of the lofty trees, and which greatly amused them. It was the hour for the mail-carts and stages to start, and nearly all those bound for the South and West at that time passed through the Champs Elysées. Every moment some heavy vehicle, painted yellow and black, heavily loaded and rendered shapeless by trunks and valises, dashed through the crowd with the sparks of a forge, the dust representing the smoke. This confusion amused the girls.

One of these vehicles, which could hardly be distinguished through the branches, stopped for a moment, and then started again at a gallop. This surprised Fantine.

"That is strange," she said, "I fancied that the diligence never stopped."

Favorite shrugged her shoulders.

"This Fantine is really amazing, and is surprised at the simplest things. Let us suppose that I am a traveller and say to the guard of the stage-coach, 'I will walk on and you can pick me up on the quay as you pass.' The coach passes, sees me, stops and takes me in. That is done every day; you are ignorant of life, my dear."

Some time elapsed; all at once Favorite started as if waking from sleep.

"Well," she said, "where is the surprise?"

"Oh yes," Dahlia continued, "the famous surprise."

"They are a long time," said Fantine.

Just as Fantine had ended this sigh, the waiter who had served dinner came in; he held in his hand something that resembled a letter.

"What is that?" Favorite asked.

The waiter answered,—

"It is a paper which the gentlemen left for you, ladies."

"Why did you not bring it to us at once?"

"Because the gentlemen," the waiter went on, "ordered that it should not be delivered to you for an hour."

Favorite snatched the paper from the waiter's hands; it was really a letter.

"Stay," she said, "there is no address, but the following words are written on it: **THIS IS THE SURPRISE.**" She quickly opened the letter and read (she could read).

"Well-beloved !

"Know that we have relatives : perhaps you are not perfectly cognizant what they are ; it means fathers and mothers in the civil, puerile, and honest code. Well, these relatives are groaning ; these old people claim us as their own ; these worthy men and women call us prodigal sons. They desire our return home, and offer to kill the fatted calf. We obey them, as we are virtuous ; at the hour when you read this, five impetuous steeds will be conveying us back to our papas and mammas. We are going, to quote the language of Bossuet ; we are going, gone. We are flying away in the arms of Laffitte and on the wings of Caillard. The Toulouse coach is dragging us away from the abyss, and that abyss is yourselves, pretty dears. We are re-entering society, duty, and order, at a sharp trot, and at the rate of nine miles an hour. It is important for our country that we should become, like everybody else, Prefects, fathers of a family, game-keepers and Councillors of State. Revere us, for we are sacrificing ourselves. Dry up your tears for us rapidly, and get a substitute speedily. If this letter lacerates your hearts, treat it in the same fashion. Good-bye. For nearly two years we rendered you happy, so do not owe us any grudge.

"(Signed)

BLACHEVELLE.

"FAMEUIL.

"LISTOLIER.

"FELIX THOLOMYÈS.

"P.S. The dinner is paid for."



The four girls looked at each other, and Favorite was the first to break the silence.

"I don't care," she said, "it is a capital joke."

"It is very funny," Zephine remarked.

"It must have been Blachevelle who had that idea," Favorite continued; "it makes me in love with him. So soon as he has left me I am beginning to grow fond of him; the old story."

"No," said Dahlia, "that is an idea of Tholomyès. That can be easily seen."

"In that case," Favorite retorted, "down with Blachevelle and long live Tholomyès!"

And they burst into a laugh, in which Fantine joined; an hour later though, when she returned to her bedroom, she burst into tears: he was, as we have said, her first love; she had yielded to Tholomyès as to a husband, and the poor girl had a child.

## BOOK IV.

### CHAPTER I.

#### TWO MOTHERS MEET.

THERE was in the first quarter of this century a sort of pot-house at Montfermeil, near Paris, which no longer exists. It was kept by a couple of the name of Thénardier, and was situated in the Rue du Boulanger. Over the door a board was nailed to the wall, and on this board was painted something resembling a man carrying on his back another man, who wore large gilt general's epaulettes with silver stars; red daubs represented blood, and the rest of the painting was smoke, probably representing a battle. At the bottom could be read the inscription: THE SERGEANT OF WATERLOO.

Though nothing is more common than a cart at a pot-house door, the vehicle, or rather fragment of a vehicle, which blocked up the street in front of the Sergeant of Waterloo, one spring evening in 1818, would have certainly attracted the attention of any painter who had passed that way. It was the fore-part of one of those wains used in wood countries for dragging planks and trunks of trees; it was composed of a massive iron axle-tree, in which a heavy pole was imbedded and supported by two enormous wheels. The whole thing was sturdy, crushing, and ugly, and it might have passed for the carriage of a monster gun. The ruts had given

the wheels, fellos, spokes, axle-tree, and pole, a coating of mud, a hideous yellow plaster, much like that with which cathedrals are so often adorned. The wood-work was hidden by mud, and the iron by rust. Under the axle-tree was festooned a heavy chain, suited for a convict Goliath. This chain made you think, not of the wood it was intended to secure, but of the mastodons and mammoths for which it would have served as harness; it had the air of a cyclopean and superhuman bagne, and seemed removed from some monster. Homer would have bound Polyphemus with it, and Shakespeare, Caliban.

Why was this thing at this place in the street? First, to block it up; secondly, to finish the rusting process. There is in the old social order a multitude of institutions which may be found in the same way in the open air, and which have no other reasons for being there. The centre of the chain hung rather close to the ground, and on the curve, as on the rope of a swing, two little girls were seated on this evening, in an exquisite embrace, one about two years and a-half, the other eighteen months; the younger being in the arms of the elder. An artfully-tied handkerchief prevented them from falling, for a mother had seen this frightful chain and said, "What a famous plaything for my children!" The two children, who were prettily dressed and with some taste, were radiant; they looked like two roses among old iron; their eyes were a triumph, their healthy cheeks laughed; one had auburn hair, the other was a brunette; their innocent faces had a look of surprise; a flowering shrub a little distance off sent to passers-by a perfume which seemed to come from them; and the younger displayed her nudity with the chaste indecency of childhood. Above and around their two delicate heads, moulded in happiness and bathed in light, the gigantic wain, black with rust, almost terrible, and bristling with curves and savage angles, formed the porch of a cavern, as it were. A few yards off, and seated in the inn door, the mother, a woman of no very pleasing appearance,

but touching at this moment, was swinging the children by the help of a long cord, and devouring them with her eyes, for fear of an accident, with that animal and heavenly expression peculiar to maternity. At each oscillation the hideous links produced a sharp sound, resembling a cry of anger. The little girls were delighted; the setting sun mingled with the joy, and nothing could be so charming as this caprice of accident which had made of a Titanic chain a cherub's wing. While playing with her little ones the mother sang, terribly out of tune, a romance, very celebrated at that day,—

“ Il le faut, disait un guerrier.”

Her song and contemplation of her daughters prevented her hearing and seeing what took place in the street. Some one, however, had approached her, as she began the first couplets of her romance, and suddenly she heard a voice saying close to her ear,—

“ You have two pretty children, Madame.”

“—a la belle et tendre Imogène,”

the mother answered, continuing her song, and then turned her head. A woman was standing a few paces from her, who also had a child, which she was carrying in her arms. She also carried a heavy bag. This woman's child was one of the most divine creatures possible to behold; she was a girl between two and three years of age, and could have vied with the two other little ones in the coquettishness of her dress. She had on a hood of fine linen, ribbons at her shoulders, and Valenciennes lace in her cap. Her raised petticoats displayed her white, dimpled, fine thigh; it was admirably pink and healthy, and her cheeks made one long to bite them. Nothing could be said of her eyes, except that they were very large, and that she had magnificent lashes, for she was asleep. She was sleeping with the absolute confidence peculiar to her age; a mother's arms are made of tenderness, and children sleep soundly in

them. As for the mother, she looked grave and sorrowful, and was dressed like a work-girl who was trying to become a country-woman again. She was young ; was she pretty ? perhaps so ; but in this dress she did not appear so. Her hair, a light lock of which peeped out, seemed very thick, but was completely hidden beneath a nun's hood ; ugly, tight, and fastened under her chin. Laughter displays fine teeth, when a person happens to possess them ; but she did not laugh. Her eyes looked as if they had not been dry for a long time ; she had a fatigued and rather sickly air, and she looked at the child sleeping in her arms in the manner peculiar to a mother who has suckled her babe. A large blue handkerchief, like those served out to the invalids, folded like a shawl, clumsily hid her shape. Her hands were rough and covered with red spots, and her forefinger was hardened and torn by the needle. She had on a brown cloth cloak, a cotton gown, and heavy shoes. It was Fantine.

It was difficult to recognize her, but, after an attentive examination, she still possessed her beauty. As for her toilette, that aerian toilette of muslin and ribbons which seemed made of gaiety, folly, and music, to be full of bells, and perfumed with lilacs—it had faded away like the dazzling hoar-frost which looks like diamonds in the sun ; it melts, and leaves the branch quite black.

Ten months had elapsed since the "good joke." What had taken place during those ten months ? we can guess. After desertion, want. Fantine at once lost sight of Favorite, Zephine, and Dahlia, for this tie broken on the side of the men separated the women. They would have been greatly surprised a fortnight after had they been told that they were friends, for there was no reason for it. Fantine remained alone when the father of her child had gone away—alas ! such ruptures are irrevocable. She found herself absolutely isolated ; she had lost her habit of working, and had gained her taste for pleasure. Led away by her *liaison* with Tholomyès to despise the little trade she knew, she had neglected her connection,

and it was lost. She had no resource. Fantine could hardly read, and could not write; she had been merely taught in childhood to sign her name, and she had sent a letter to Tholomyès, then a second, then a third, through a public writer, but Tholomyès did not answer one of them. One day Fantine heard the gossips say, while looking at her daughter, "Children like that are not regarded seriously, people shrug their shoulders at them." Then she thought of Tholomyès who shrugged his shoulders at her child, and did not regard the innocent creature seriously, and her heart turned away from this man. What was she to do now? She knew not where to turn. She had committed a fault, but the foundation of her nature, we must remember, was modesty and virtue. She felt vaguely that she was on the eve of falling into distress, and gliding into worse. She needed courage, and she had it. The idea occurred to her of returning to her native town M. sur M. There some one might know her, and give her work; but she must hide her fault. And she vaguely glimpsed at the possible necessity of a separation more painful still than the first; her heart was contracted, but she formed her resolution. Fantine, as we shall see, possessed the stern bravery of life. She had already valiantly given up dress; she dressed in calico, and had put all her silk ribbons and laces upon her daughter, the only vanity left her, and it was a holy one. She sold all she possessed, which brought her in 200 francs; and when she had paid her little debts, she had only about 80 francs left. At the age of two-and-twenty, on a fine spring morning, she left Paris, carrying her child on her back. Any one who had seen them pass would have felt pity for them; the woman had nothing in the world but her child, and the child nothing but her mother in her world. Fantine had suckled her child; this had bent her chest, and she was coughing a little.

We shall have no further occasion to speak of M. Felix Tholomyès. We will merely say that twenty years later, in the reign of Louis Philippe, he was a stout country

lawyer, influential and rich, a sensible elector, and a very strict juror, but always a man of pleasure.

About midday, after resting herself now and then by travelling from time to time, at the rate of three or four leagues an hour, in what were then called the "little vehicles of the suburbs of Paris," Fantine found herself at Montfermeil. As she passed the Sergeant of Waterloo, the two little girls in their monster swing had dazzled her, and she stopped before this vision of joy. There are charms in life, and these two little girls were one for this mother. She looked at them with great emotion, for the presence of angels is an announcement of Paradise. These two little creatures were evidently happy! She looked then, and admired them with such tenderness that at the moment when the mother was drawing breath between two verses of her song, she could not refrain from saying to her what we have already recorded.

"You have two pretty children, Madame."

The most ferocious creatures are disarmed by a caress given to their little ones. The mother raised her head, thanked her, and bade her sit down on the door bench. The two women began talking.

"My name is Madame Thénardier," the mother of the little ones said, "we keep this inn."

Then returning to her romance, she went on humming,—

"Il le faut, je suis chevalier,  
Et je pars pour la Palestine."

This Madame Thénardier was a red-headed, thin, angular woman, the soldier's wife in all its ugliness, and, strange to say, with a languishing air which she owed to reading romances. She was a finikin woman, for old romances, by working on the imaginations of landladies, produce that effect. She was still young, scarce thirty. If this woman, now sitting, had been standing up, perhaps her height and colossal proportions, fitting for a show, would have at once startled the traveller, destroyed her confidence, and prevented what we have to

record. A person sitting instead of standing up—destinies hang on this. True—and does it not prove that with *man only* are things *little or great*.

The woman told her story with some mortification. She was a work-girl, her husband was dead; she could get no work in Paris, and was going to seek it elsewhere, in her native town. She had left Paris that very morning on foot; as she felt tired from carrying her child, she had travelled by the stage coach to Villermoble, from that place she walked to Montfermeil. The little one had walked a little, but not much, for she was so young, and so she had been obliged to carry her, and the darling had gone to sleep—and as she said this she gave her daughter a passionate kiss, which awoke her. The babe opened her eyes, large blue eyes like her mother's, and gazed at what? Nothing, everything, with that serious and at times stern air of infants, which is a mystery of their luminous innocence in the presence of our twilight virtues. We might say that they feel themselves to be angels, and know us to be men. Then the child began laughing, and, though its mother had to check it, slipped down to the ground with the undauntable energy of a little creature wishing to run. All at once, she noticed the other two children in their swing, stopped short, and put out her tongue as a sign of admiration. Mother Thénardier unfastened her children, took them out of the swing, and said,—

“ Play about all three.”

Such ages soon grow tame, and in a minute the little Thénardiens were playing with the newcomer at making holes in the ground, which was an immense pleasure. The stranger child was very merry; the goodness of the mother is written in the gaiety of the baby. She had picked up a piece of wood which she used as a spade, and was energetically digging a grave large enough for a fly. The two went on talking.

“ What's the name of your bantling ? ”

“ Cosette.”

For Cosette read Euphrasie, for that was the child's



real name, but the mother had converted Euphrasie into Cosette, though that gentle, graceful instinct peculiar to mothers and the people, which changes Josefa into Pepita, and Françoise into Sellette. It is a species of derivation which deranges and disconcerts the entire science of etymologists. We know a grandmother who contrived to make out of Theodore, Gnon.

"What is her age?"

"Going on for three."

"Just the same age as my eldest."

In the meantime the children were grouped in a posture of profound anxiety and blessedness; an event had occurred. A large worm crept out of the ground, and they were frightened, and were in ecstasy; their radiant brows touched each other, and they looked like three heads in a halo.

"How soon children get to know one another," Mother Thénardier exclaimed; "why, they might be taken for three sisters."

The word was probably the spark which the other mother had been waiting for; she seized the speaker's hand, looked at her fixedly, and said,—

"Will you take charge of my child for me?"

The woman gave one of those starts of surprise which are neither assent nor refusal. Fantine continued,—

"Look ye, I cannot take the child with me to my town, for when a woman has a baby, it is a hard matter for her to get a situation. People are so foolish in our part. It was Heaven that made me pass in front of your inn; when I saw your little ones so pretty, so clean, so happy, it gave me a turn. I said to myself, 'She is a kind mother.' It is so; they will be three sisters. Then I shall not be long before I come back. Will you take care of my child?"

"We will see," said Madame Thénardier.

"I would pay six francs a month."

Here a man's voice cried from the back of the taproom,—

"Can't be done under seven, and six months paid in advance."

"Six times seven are forty-two," said the landlady.

"I will pay it," said the mother.

"And seventeen francs in addition for extra expenses," the man's voice added.

"Total fifty-seven francs," said Madame Thénardier; and through these figures she sang vaguely,—

"Il le faut disait un guerrier."

"I will pay it," the mother said; "I have eighty francs, and shall have enough left to get home on foot. I shall earn money there, and so soon as I have a little I will come and fetch my darling."

The man's voice continued,—

"Has the little one a stock of clothing?"

"It is my husband," said Madame Thénardier.

"Of course, she has clothes, poor little treasure. I saw it was your husband; and a fine stock of clothes too, a wonderful stock, a dozen of everything, and silk frocks like a lady. The things are in my bag."

"They must be handed over," the man's voice remarked.

"Of course they must," said the mother, "it would be funny if I left my child naked."

The master's face appeared.

"All right," he said.

The bargain was concluded, the mother spent the night at the inn, paid her money, and left her child, fastened up her bag, which was now light, and started the next morning with the intention of returning soon. Such departures are arranged calmly, but they entail despair. A neighbour's wife saw the mother going away, and went home saying,—

"I have just seen a woman crying in the street as if her heart was broken."

When Cosette's mother had gone, the man said to his wife,—

"That money will meet my bill for one hundred and ten francs, which falls due to-morrow, and I was fifty

frances short It would have been protested, and I should have had a bailiff put in. You set a famous mouse-trap with your brats."

"Without suspecting it," said the woman.

## CHAPTER II.

### A SKETCH OF TWO UGLY FACES.

THE captured mouse was very small, but the cat is pleased even with a thin mouse. Who were the Thénardiens? We will say one word about them for the present, and complete the sketch hereafter. These beings belonged to the bastard class, composed of coarse parvenus, and of degraded people of intellect, which stands between the classes called the middle and the lower, and combines some of the faults of the second with nearly all the vices of the first, though without possessing the generous impulse of the working man or the honest regularity of the tradesman.

Theirs were those dwarf natures which easily become monstrous, when any gloomy fire accidentally warms them. There was in the woman the basis of a witch, in the man the stuff for a beggar. Both were in the highest degree susceptible of that sort of hideous progress which is made in the direction of evil. There are crab-like souls which constantly recoil toward darkness, retrograde in life rather than advance, employ experience to augment their deformity, incessantly grow worse, and grow more and more covered with an increasing blackness. This man and this woman had souls of this sort.

Thénardier was peculiarly troublesome to the physiognomist: there are some men whom you need only look at to distrust them, for they are restless behind and threatening in front. We can no more answer for what they have done than for what they will do. The shadow

they have in their glance denounces them. Merely by hearing them say a word or seeing them make a gesture, we get a glimpse of dark secrets in their past, dark mysteries in their future. This Thénardier, could he be believed, had been a soldier—sergeant, he said; he had probably gone through the campaign of 1815, and had even behaved rather bravely, as it seems. We shall see presently how the matter really stood. The sign of his inn was an allusion to one of his exploits, and he had painted it himself, for he could do a little of everything—badly. It was the epoch when the old classical romance—which after being *Clelie*, had now become *Lodoiska*, and though still noble, was daily growing more vulgar, and had fallen from Mademoiselle de Scudéry to Madame Bournon Malarme, and from Madame de Lafayette to Madame Barthelemy Hadot—was inflaming the loving souls of the porters' wives in Paris, and even extended its ravages into the suburbs. Madame Thénardier was just intelligent enough to read books of this nature and lived on them. She thus drowned any brains she possessed, and, so long as she remained young and a little beyond, it gave her a sort of pensive attitude by the side of her husband, who was a scamp of some depth, an almost grammatical ruffian, coarse and delicate at the same time, but who, in matters of sentimentalism, read Pigault Lebrun, and, "in all that concerned the sex," as he said in his jargon, was a correct and unmingled booby. His wife was some twelve or fifteen years younger than he, and when her romantically flowing locks began to grow grey, when the Megæra was disengaged from the Pamela, she was only a stout wicked woman, who had been pampered with foolish romances. As such absurdities cannot be read with impunity, the result was that her eldest daughter was christened Eponine; as for the younger, the poor girl was all but named Gulnare, and owed it to a fortunate diversion made by a romance of Ducray Duminil's, that she was only christened Azelma.

By the way, all is not ridiculous and superficial in the

curious epoch to which we are alluding, and which might be called the anarchy of baptismal names. By the side of the romantic element, which we have just pointed out, there was the social symptom. It is not rare at the present day for a drover's son to be called Arthur, Alfred, or Alphonse, and for the Viscount—if there are any Viscounts left—to be called Thomas, Pierre, or Jacques. This displacement which gives the "elegant" name to the plebeian, and the rustic name to the aristocrat, is nothing else than an eddy of equality. The irresistible penetration of the new blast is visible in this as in everything else. Beneath this apparent discord, there is a grand and deep thing, the French Revolution.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE LARK.

It is not enough to be bad in order to prosper : and the pot-house was a failure. Thanks to the fifty-seven francs, Thénardier had been able to avoid a protest, and honour his signature ; but the next month they wanted money again, and his wife took to Paris and pledged Cosette's outfit for sixty francs. So soon as this sum was spent, the Thénardiens grew accustomed to see in the little girl a child they had taken in through charity, and treated her accordingly. As she had no clothes, she was dressed in the left-off chemises and petticoats of the little Thénardiens, that is to say, in rags. She was fed on the leavings of everybody, a little better than the dog, and a little worse than the cat. Dog and cat were her usual company at dinner : for Cosette ate with them under the table off a wooden trencher like theirs.

The mother, who had settled, as we shall see hereafter, at M. sur M., wrote, or, to speak more correctly, had letters written every month to inquire after her child. The Thénardiens invariably replied that Cosette was

getting on famously. When the first six months had passed, the mother sent seven francs for the seventh month, and continued to send the money punctually month by month. The year was not ended before Thénardier said, "A fine thing that! what does she expect us to do with seven francs!" and he wrote to demand twelve. The mother, whom they persuaded that her child was happy and healthy, submitted, and sent the twelve francs.

Some natures cannot love on one side without hating on the other. Mother Thénardier passionately loved her own two daughters, which made her detest the stranger. It is sad to think that a mother's love can look so ugly. Though Cosette occupied so little room, it seemed to her as if her children were robbed of it, and that the little one diminished the air her daughters breathed. This woman, like many women of her class, had a certain amount of caresses and another of blows and insults to expend daily. If she had not had Cosette, it is certain that her daughters, though they were idolized, would have received the entire amount, but the strange child did the service of diverting the blows on herself, while the daughters only received the caresses. Cosette did not make a movement that did not bring down on her head a hailstorm of violent and unmerited chastisement. The poor, weak child, unnecessarily punished, scolded, cuffed, and beaten, saw by her side two little creatures like herself who lived in radiant happiness.

As Madame Thénardier was unkind to Cosette, Eponine and Azelma were the same; for children, at that age, are copies of their mother; the form is smaller, that is all. A year passed, then another, and people said in the village,—

"Those Thénardiens are worthy people. They are not well off, and yet they bring up a poor child left on their hands."

Cosette was supposed to be deserted by her mother; Thénardier, however, having learnt in some obscure way that the child was probably illegitimate, and that the mother could not confess it, insisted on 15 francs a

month, saying that the creature was growing and eating, and threatening to send her back. "She must not play the fool with me," he shouted, "or I'll let her brat fall like a bombshell into her hiding-place. I must have an increase." The mother paid the 15 francs. Year by year the child grew, and so did her wretchedness: so long as Cosette was little, she was the scapegoat of the two other children; so soon as she began to be developed a little, that is to say, even before she was five years old, she became the servant of the house. Cosette was made to go on messages, sweep the rooms, the yard, the street, wash the dishes, and even carry heavy bundles. The Thénardiens considered themselves the more justified in acting thus, because the mother, who was still at M. sur M., was beginning to pay badly, and was several months in arrear.

If the mother had returned to Montfermeil at the end of three years, she would not have recognized her child. Cosette, so pretty and ruddy on her arrival in this house, was now thin and sickly. She had a timid look about her. "It's cunning!" said the Thénardiens. Injustice had made her sulky and wretchedness had made her ugly. Nothing was left her but her fine eyes, which were painful to look at, because, as they were so large, it seemed as if a greater amount of sadness was visible in them. It was a heartrending sight to see this poor child, scarce six years of age, shivering in winter under her calico rags, and sweeping the street before daybreak, with an enormous broom in her small red hands and a tear in her large eyes.

The country people called her "the lark," the lower classes, who are fond of metaphors, had given the name to the poor little creature, "who was no larger than a bird, trembling, frightened, and starting, who was always the first awake in the house and the village, and ever in the street or the fields by daybreak.

There was this difference, however—this poor lark did not sing.

## BOOK V.

### CHAPTER I.

#### PROGRESS IN BLACK-BEAD MAKING.

WHAT had become of the mother, who, according to the people of Montfermeil, appeared to have deserted her child? Where was she? what was she doing? After leaving her little Cosette with the Thénardiens, she had continued her journey and arrived at M. sur M. Fantine had been away from her province for ten years, and while she had been slowly descending from misery to misery, her native town had prospered. About two years before, one of those industrial facts which are the events of small towns had taken place. The details are important, and we think it useful to develop them—we might almost say, to understand them.

From time immemorial M. sur M. had as a special trade the imitation of English jet and German black beads. This trade had hitherto only vegetated, owing to the dearness of the material, which reacted on the artisan. At the moment when Fantine returned to M. sur M. an extraordinary transformation had taken place in the production of "black articles." Towards the close of 1815, a man, a stranger, had settled in the town, and had the idea of substituting in this trade gum lac for rosin, and in bracelets particularly, scraps of bent plate



for welded plate. This slight change was a revolution ; it prodigiously reduced the cost of the material, which, in the first place, allowed the wages to be raised, a benefit for the town ; secondly, improved the manufacture, an advantage for the consumer ; and, thirdly, allowed the goods to be sold cheap, while producing them the profit, an advantage for the manufacturer.

In less than three years the inventor of the process had become rich, which is a good thing, and had made all rich about him, which is better. He was a stranger in the department ; no one knew anything about his origin, and but little about his start. It was said that he had entered the town with but very little money, a few hundred francs at the most ; but with this small capital, placed at the service of an ingenious idea, and fertilized by regularity and thought, he made his own fortune and that of the town. On his arrival at M. sur M. he had the dress, manners, and language of a working man. It appears that on the very December night when he obscurely entered M. sur M. with his knapsack on his back, and a knotted stick in his hand, a great fire broke out in the Town Hall. This man rushed into the midst of the flames, and at the risk of his life saved two children who happened to belong to the captain of gendarmes ; hence no one dreamed of asking for his passport. On this occasion his name was learned ; he called himself Father Madeleine. He was a man of about fifty, with a preoccupied air, and he was good-hearted. That was all that could be said of him.

Thanks to the rapid progress of this trade which he had so admirably remodelled, M. sur M. had become a place of considerable trade. Spain, which consumes an immense amount of jet, gave large orders for it annually, and in this trade M. sur M. almost rivalled London and Berlin. Father Madeleine's profits were so great, that after the second year he was able to build a large factory, in which were two spacious workshops, one for men, the other for women. Any one who was hungry need only to come, and was sure to find there employment and

bread. Father Madeleine expected from the men good will, from the women purity, and from all probity. He had divided the workshops in order to separate the sexes, and enable the women and girls to remain virtuous. On this point he was inflexible, and it was the only one in which he was at all intolerant. This sternness was the more justifiable because M. sur M. was a garrison town, and opportunities for corruption abounded. Altogether his arrival had been a benefit, and his presence was a providence. Before Father Madeleine came everything was languishing, and now all led the healthy life of work. A powerful circulation warmed and penetrated everything; stagnation and wretchedness were unknown. There was not a pocket, however obscure, in which there was not a little money, nor a lodging so poor in which there was not a little joy.

As we have said, in the midst of this activity, of which he was the cause and the pivot, Father Madeleine made his fortune, but, singularly enough in a plain man of business, this did not appear to be his chief care; he seemed to think a great deal of others, and but little of himself. In 1820 he was known to have a sum of 630,000 francs in Lafitte's bank; but before he put that amount on one side he had spent more than a million for the town and the poor. The hospital was badly endowed, and he added ten beds. M. sur M. is divided into an upper and a lower town; the latter, in which he lived, had only one school, a poor tenement falling in ruins, and he built two, one for boys and one for girls. He paid the two teachers an amount the double of their poor official salary, and to some one who expressed surprise, he said, "The two first functionaries of the State are the nurse and the school-master." He had established at his own charges an hospice, a thing at that time almost unknown in France, and a charitable fund for old and infirm workmen. As his factory was a centre, a new district, in which there was a large number of indigent families, rapidly sprang up around it, and he opened there a free Dispensary.

At the beginning kind souls said, "He is a man who

wants to grow rich : " when it was seen that he enriched the town before enriching himself, the same charitable souls said, " He is ambitious." This seemed the more likely because he was religious, and even practised to a certain extent a line which was admired in those days. He went regularly to hear Low Mass on Sundays, and the local deputy, who scented rivalry everywhere, soon became alarmed about this religion. This deputy, who had been a member of the legislative council of the Empire, shared the religious ideas of a Father of the Oratory, known by the name of Fouché, Duc d'Otranto, whose creature and friend he had been. But when he saw the rich manufacturer Madeleine go to seven o'clock Low Mass, he scented a possible candidate, and resolved to go beyond him ; he chose a Jesuit confessor, and went to High Mass and Vespers. Ambition at that time was, in the true sense of the term, a steeplechase. The poor profited by the alarm, for the honourable deputy founded two beds at the hospital, which made twelve.

In 1819, the report spread one morning through the town that, on the recommendation of the Prefect, and in consideration of services rendered the town, Father Madeleine was about to be nominated by the king, Mayor of M——. Those who had declared the newcomer an ambitious man eagerly seized this opportunity to exclaim, " Did we not say so ? " All M. was in an uproar ; for the rumour was well founded. A few days after, the appointment appeared in the *Moniteur*, and the next day Father Madeleine declined the honour. In the same year, the new processes worked by him were shown at the Industrial Exhibition ; and on the report of the jury, the king made the inventor a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. There was a fresh commotion in the little town : " Well, it was the cross he wanted," but Father Madeleine declined the cross. Decidedly the man was an enigma, but charitable souls got out of the difficulty by saying, " After all he is a sort of adventurer."

As we have seen, the country owed him much, and the poor owed him everything ; he was so useful that he could

not help being honoured, and so gentle that people could not help loving him ; his workpeople especially adored him, and he bore this adoration with a sort of melancholy gravity. When he was known to be rich, " people in society " bowed to him, and he was called in the town Monsieur Madeleine, but his workmen and the children continued to call him Father Madeleine, and this caused him his happiest smile. In proportion as he ascended, invitations showered upon him ; and society claimed him as its own. The little formal drawing-rooms, which had of course been at first closed to the artisan, opened their doors wide to the millionaire. A thousand advances were made to him, but he refused. This time again charitable souls were not thrown out, " He is an ignorant man of poor education. No one knows where he comes from. He could not pass muster in society, and it is doubtful whether he can read." When he was seen to be earning money, they said, " He is a tradesman ; " when he scattered his money, they said, " He is ambitious ; " when he rejected honour, they said, " He is an adventurer ; " and when he repulsed society, they said, " He is a brute."

In 1820, five years after his arrival at M——, the services he had rendered the town were so brilliant, the will of the whole country was so unanimous, that the king again nominated him Mayor of the town. He refused again, but the Prefect would not accept his refusal ; all the notables came to beg, the people supplicated him in the open streets, and the pressure was so great that he eventually assented. It was noticed that what appeared specially to determine him was the almost angry remark of an old woman, who cried to him from her door : " A good Mayor is useful ; a man should not recoil before the good he may be able to do." This was the third phase of his ascent ; Father Madeleine had become Monsieur Madeleine, and Monsieur Madeleine became Monsieur le Maire.

## CHAPTER II.

## SUMS LODGED AT LAFITTE'S.

FATHER MADELEINE remained as simple as he had been on the first day : he had grey hair, a serious eye, the bronzed face of a working-man, and the thoughtful face of a philosopher. He habitually wore a broad-brimmed hat, and a long coat of coarse cloth, buttoned up to the chin. He performed his duties as Mayor, but beyond that lived solitary ; he spoke to few persons, liked to escape from compliments, smiled to save himself from laughing, and gave to save himself from smiling. The women said of him, " What a fine bear ! " and his great pleasure was to walk about the fields. He always took his meals with an open book before him, and he had a well-selected library. He was fond of books, for they are cool and sure friends. In proportion as leisure came with fortune, he seemed to employ it in cultivating his mind : it was noticed that with each year he spent in M—— his language became more polite, chosen, and gentle.

He was fond of taking a gun with him on his walks, but rarely fired ; when he did so by chance, he had an infallible aim, which was almost terrific. He never killed an inoffensive animal or a small bird. Though he was no longer young, he was said to possess prodigious strength : he lent a hand to any one who needed it, raised a fallen horse, put his shoulder to a wheel stuck in the mud, or stopped a runaway bull by the horns. His pockets were always full of half-pence when he went out, and empty when he came home ; whenever he passed through a village the ragged children ran merrily after him, and surrounded him like a swarm of gnats. It was supposed that he must have formerly lived a rustic life, for he had all sorts of useful secrets which he taught the peasants. He showed them how to destroy blight in wheat by sprinkling the granary and pouring into the cracks of the boards a solution of common salt, and to get rid of weevils by

hanging up everywhere, on the walls and roofs, flowering orviot. He had recipes to extirpate from arable land, tares, and other parasitic plants which injure wheat, and would defend a rabbit hutch from rats by the mere smell of a little guinea pig, which he placed in it.

One day he saw some countrymen very busy in tearing up nettles ; he looked at the pile of uprooted and already withered plants and said : " They are dead, and yet they are good, if you know how to use them. When nettles are young, the tops are an excellent vegetable. When they are old, they have threads and fibre like hemp and flax. When chopped up, nettles are good for fowls ; when pounded, excellent for horned cattle. Nettle-seed mixed with the food renders the coats of cattle shining, and the root mixed with salt produces a fine yellow colour. The nettle is also excellent hay, which can be mown twice ; and what does it require ? A little earth, no care, and no cultivation. The only thing is that the seed falls as it ripens, and is difficult to garner. If a little care were taken, the nettle would be useful ; but, being neglected, it becomes injurious, and is then killed. Here men resemble nettles ! " He added after a moment's silence : " My friends, remember this—there are no bad herbs or bad men ; there are only bad cultivators."

The children also loved him, because he could make them pretty little toys of straw and cocoa-nut shells. When he saw a church door hung with black, he went in ; he went after a funeral as other persons do after a christening. The misfortunes of others attracted him, owing to his great gentleness ; he mingled with friends in mourning, and with the priests round a coffin. He seemed to be fond of hearing those mournful psalms which are full of the vision of another world. With his eye fixed on heaven he listened, with a species of aspiration toward all the mysteries of Infinitude, to the sad voice singing on the brink of the obscure abyss of death. He did a number of good actions, while as careful to hide them as if they were bad. He would quietly at night enter houses, and furtively ascend the stairs. A poor fellow, on returning to

his garret, would find that his door had been opened, at times forced, during his absence ; the man would cry that a robber had been there, but when he entered, the first thing he saw was a gold coin left on the table. The robber who had been there was Father Madeleine.

He was affable and sad : people said, " There is a rich man who does not look proud : a lucky man who does not look happy." Some persons asserted that he was a mysterious character, and declared that no one ever entered his bedroom, which was a real anchorite's cell, furnished with winged hour-glasses and embellished with cross bones and death's heads. This was so often repeated that some elegant and spiteful ladies of M—— came to him one day, and said, " Monsieur le Maire, *do* show us your bedroom, for people say that it is a grotto." He smiled and led them straightway to the " grotto ;" they were terribly punished for their curiosity, as it was a bedroom, merely containing mahogany furniture as ugly as all furniture of that sort, and hung with a paper at sixpence the piece. They could not notice anything but two double-branched candlesticks of an antiquated pattern, standing on the mantelpiece, and seemed to be silver, " because they were Hall-marked "—a remark full of the spirit of small towns. People did not the less continue to repeat, however, that no one ever entered this bedroom, and that it was a hermitage, a hole, a tomb. They also whispered that he had immense sums lodged with Lafitte, and with this peculiarity that things were always at his immediate disposal, " so that," they added, " M. Madeleine could go any morning to Lafitte's, sign a receipt, and carry off his two or three millions of francs in ten minutes." In reality these " two or three millions " were reduced, as we have said, to six hundred and thirty or forty thousand francs.

---

## CHAPTER III.

## M. MADELEINE GOES INTO MOURNING.

At the beginning of 1821 the papers announced the decease of M. Myriel, Bishop of D——, "surnamed Monseigneur Welcome," and who died in the odour of sanctity at the age of eighty-two. The Bishop of D——, to add here a detail omitted by the papers, had been blind for several years, and was satisfied to be blind, as his sister was by his side.

It was from this paradise that Monseigneur Welcome had passed to the other. The announcement of his death was copied by the local paper of M——, and on the next day Monsieur Madeleine appeared dressed in black, with crape on his hat. The mourning was noticed in the town, and people gossiped about it, for it seemed to throw a gleam over M. Madeleine's origin. It was concluded that he was somehow connected with the Bishop. "He is in mourning for the Bishop," was said in drawing-rooms; this added inches to M. Madeleine's stature, and suddenly gave him a certain consideration in the noble world of M——. The microscopic Faubourg St. Germain of the town thought about raising the quarantine of M. Madeleine, the probable relation of a bishop, and M. Madeleine remarked the promotion he had obtained in the increased love of the old ladies, and the greater amount of smiles from the young. One evening a lady belonging to this little great world, curious by right of seniority, ventured to say, "M. le Maire is doubtless a cousin of the late Bishop of D——?"

He answered, "No, Madame."

"But," the Dowager went on, "you wear mourning for him."

"In my youth I was a footman in his family," was the answer.

Another thing noticed was, that when a young Savoyard passed through the town, looking for chimneys to



sweep, the Mayor sent for him, asked his name, and gave him money. The Savoyard boys told each other of this, and a great many passed through M——.

## CHAPTER IV.

### VAGUE FLASHES ON THE HORIZON.

By degrees and with time all the opposition died out ; at first there had been calumnies against M. Madeleine—a species of trial which all rising men undergo ; then it was only backbiting ; then it was only malice ; and eventually all this faded away. The respect felt for him was complete, unanimous, and cordial, and the moment arrived in 1821 when the name of the Mayor was uttered at M—— with nearly the same accent as “ Monseigneur the Bishop ” had been said at D—— in 1815. People came for ten leagues round to consult M. Madeleine ; he settled disputes, prevented lawsuits, and reconciled enemies. Everybody was willing to accept him as arbiter, and it seemed as if he had the book of natural law for his soul. It was a sort of contagious veneration, which in six or seven years spread all over the countryside.

Only one man in the town and bailiwick resisted this contagion, and whatever M. Madeleine might do, remained rebellious to it, as if a sort of incorruptible and imperturbable instinct kept him on his guard.

This person, who was grave, with an almost menacing gravity, was one of those men who, though only noticed for a moment, preoccupy the observer. His name was Javert, and he belonged to the police, and performed at M—— the laborious but useful duties of an inspector. He had not seen Madeleine's beginning, for he was indebted for the post he occupied to the Secretary of Count Anglé, at that time Prefect of Police at Paris. When Javert arrived at M——, the great manufacturer's fortune was made, and Father Madeleine had become Mon-

sieur Madeleine. Some police officers have a peculiar face, which is complicated by an air of baseness, blended with an air of authority. Javert had this face, less the baseness. In our conviction, if souls were visible, we should distinctly see the strange fact that every individual of the human species corresponds to some one of the species of animal creation ; and we might easily recognize the truth which has as yet scarce occurred to the thinker, that, from the oyster to the eagle, from the hog to the tiger, all animals are in man, and that each of them is in a man ; at times several of them at once. Animals are nothing else than the figures of our virtues and our vices, wandering before our eyes, the visible phantoms of our souls. GOD shows these to us in order to make us reflect ; but, as animals are only shadows, GOD has not made them capable of education in the complete sense of the term, for of what use would it be ? On the other hand, our souls being realities and having an end of their own, GOD has endowed them with intelligence ; that is to say, possible education. Social education, properly carried out, can always draw out of a soul, no matter its nature, the utility which it contains.

Now, if the reader will admit with me for a moment that in every man there is one of the animal species of creation, it will be easy for us to say what Javert the policeman was. The Asturian peasants are convinced that in every litter of wolves there is a dog which is killed by the mother, for, otherwise, when it grew it would devour the other whelps. Give a human face to this dog-son of a she-wolf, and we shall have Javert. He was born in prison ; his mother was a fortune-teller, whose husband was at the galleys. When he grew up he thought that he was beyond the pale of society, and despaired of ever entering it. He noticed that society inexorably keeps at bay two classes of men—those who attack it, and those who guard it ; he had only a choice between these two classes, and at the same time felt within him a rigidity, regularity, and probity, combined with an inexpressible hatred of the race of Bohe-

## LES MISÉRABLES.

means to which he belonged. He entered the police, got on, and at the age of forty was an inspector. In his youth he was engaged in the Southern Bagnes.

This man was made up of two very simple and relatively excellent feelings, but which he almost rendered bad by exaggerating them—respect for authority and hatred of rebellion; and in his eyes robbery, murder, and every crime were only forms of rebellion. He enveloped in a species of blind faith everybody in the service of the State, from the Prime Minister down to the gamekeeper. He covered with contempt, aversion, and disgust every one who had once crossed the legal threshold of evil. He was absolute, and admitted of no exceptions; on one side he said, "A functionary cannot be mistaken, a magistrate can do no wrong;" on the other he said, "They are irremediably lost: no good can come of them." He fully shared the opinion of those extreme minds that attribute to the human law some power of making or verifying demons, and that place a Styx at the bottom of society. He was stoical, stern, and austere; a sad dreamer, and humble yet haughty, like all fanatics. His glance was a gimlet, for it was cold and piercing. His whole life was composed in the two words, watching and overlooking. He had introduced the straight line into what is the most tortuous thing in the world; he was conscious of his usefulness, had religious respect for his duties, and was a spy as well as another is a priest. Woe to the wretch who came into his clutches! He would have arrested his father if escaping from prison, and denounced his mother had she broken her ban. And he would have done it with that sort of inner satisfaction which virtue produces. With all this he spent a life of privation, isolation, self-denial, chastity. He was the implacable duty, the police comprehended as the Spartans comprehended Sparta, a pitiless watchman, a marble-hearted spy, a Brutus contained in a Vidocq.

Javert's entire person expressed the man who spies and hides himself. The mystic school of Joseph de Maistre, which at this epoch was seasoning with high cosmogony

what were called the ultra journals, would not have failed to say that Javert was a symbol. His forehead could not be seen, for it was hidden by his hat ; his eyes could not be seen, because they were lost under his eyebrows ; his chin was plunged into his cravat, his hands were covered by his cuffs, and his cane was carried under his coat. But when the opportunity arrived, there could be seen suddenly emerging from all this shadow, as from an ambush, an angular, narrow forehead, a fatal glance, a menacing chin, enormous hands, and a monstrous rattan. In his leisure moments, which were few, he read though he hated books, and this caused him not to be utterly ignorant, as could be noticed through a certain emphasis in his language. As we have said he had no vice ; when satisfied with himself, he indulged in a pinch of snuff, and that was his connecting link with humanity. Our readers will readily understand that Javert was the terror of all that class whom the yearly statistics of the minister of justice designate under the rubric—vagabonds. The name of Javert, if uttered, set them to flight ; the face of Javert, if seen, petrified them. Such was this formidable man.

Javert was like an eye ever fixed on M. Madeleine, an eye full of suspicion and conjectures. M. Madeleine noticed it in the end ; but he considered it a matter of insignificance. He did not even ask Javert his motive, he neither sought nor shunned him, and endured his annoying glance without appearing to notice it. He treated Javert like every one else, easily and kindly. From some remarks that dropped from Javert, it was supposed that he had secretly sought, with that curiosity belonging to the breed, and in which there is as much instinct as will, all the previous traces which Father Madeleine might have left. He appeared to know, and sometimes said covertly, that some one had obtained certain information in a certain district about a certain family which had disappeared. Once he happened to say, speaking of himself, " I believe that I have got him ; " then he remained thoughtful for three days without saying a word. It

seems that the thread which he fancied he held was broken. However, there cannot be any theory really infallible in a human creature, and it is the peculiarity of instinct that it can be troubled, thrown out, and routed. If not, it would be superior to intelligence, and the brute would have a better light than man. Javert was evidently somewhat disconcerted by M. Madeleine's complete naturalness and calmness. One day, however, his strange manner seemed to produce an impression on M. Madeleine. The occasion was as follows.

## CHAPTER V.

### FATHER FAUCHELEVENT.

WHEN M. Madeleine was passing one morning through an unpaved lane in the town, he heard a noise and saw a group at some distance, to which he walked up. An old man, known as Father Fauchelevent, had fallen under his cart, and his horse was lying on the ground. This Fauchelevent was one of the few enemies M. Madeleine still had at this time. When Madeleine came to these parts, Fauchelevent, a tolerably well-educated peasant, was doing badly in business; and he saw the simple workman grow rich, while he, a master, was being ruined. This filled him with jealousy, and he had done all in his power, on every possible occasion, to injure Madeleine. Then bankruptcy came, and in his old days, having only a horse and cart left, and no family, he turned carter to earn a living.

The horse had both legs broken, and could not get up, while the old man was entangled between the wheels. The fall had been so unfortunate, that the whole weight of the cart was pressing on his chest, and it was heavily loaded. Fauchelevent uttered lamentable groans, and attempts had been made, though in vain, to draw him out; and any irregular effort, any clumsy help or shock,

might kill him. It was impossible to extricate him except by raising the cart from below, and Javert, who came up at the moment of the accident, had sent to fetch a jack. When M. Madeleine came up, the mob made way respectfully.

"Help!" old Fauchelevent cried, "is there no good soul who will save an old man?"

M. Madeleine turned to the spectators.

"Have you a jack?"

"They have gone to fetch one," a peasant answered.

"How soon will it be here?"

"Well, the nearest is at Hachet the blacksmith's, but it cannot be brought here under a good quarter of an hour."

"A quarter of an hour!" Madeleine exclaimed.

It had rained on the previous night, the ground was soft, the cart sunk deeper into it every moment, and more and more pressed the old man's chest. It was evident that his ribs would be broken within five minutes.

"It is impossible to wait a quarter of an hour," said M. Madeleine to the peasants who were looking on.

"We must."

"But do you not see that the cart is sinking into the ground?"

"So it is."

"Listen to me," Madeleine continued; "there is still room enough for a man to slip under the cart and raise it with his back. It will only take half a minute, and the poor man can be drawn out. Is there any one here who has strong loins? there are five louis to be earned."

No one stirred.

"Ten louis," Madeleine said.

His hearers looked down, and one of them muttered, "A man would have to be deucedly strong, and, besides, he would run a risk of being smashed."

"Come," Madeleine began again, "twenty louis."

The same silence.

"It is not the good will they are deficient in," a voice cried.

M. Madeleine turned and recognized Javert : he had noticed him when he came up. Javert continued,—

"It is the strength. A man would have to be tremendously strong to lift a cart like that with his back."

Then, looking fixedly at M. Madeleine, he continued, laying a marked stress on every word he uttered,—

"Monsieur Madeleine, I never knew but *one* man capable of doing what you ask."

Madeleine started, but Javert continued carelessly, though without taking his eyes off Madeleine,—

"He was a galley-slave."

"Indeed !" said Madeleine.

"At the Toulon Bagne."

Madeleine turned pale ; all this while the cart was slowly settling down, and Father Fauchelevant was screaming,—

"I am choking ; it is breaking my ribs ; a jack ! something—oh !"

Madeleine looked around him.

"Is there no one here willing to earn twenty louis and save this poor old man's life ?"

No one stirred, and Javert repeated,—

"I never knew but one man capable of acting as a jack, and it was that convict."

"Oh, it is crushing me !" the old man yelled.

Madeleine raised his head, met Javert's falcon eye still fixed on him, gazed at the peasants, and sighed sorrowfully. Then, without saying a word, he fell on his knees, and, ere the crowd had time to utter a cry, was under the cart. There was a frightful moment of expectation and silence. Madeleine, almost lying flat under the tremendous weight, twice tried in vain to bring his elbows up to his knees. The peasants shouted : "Father Madeleine, come out !" And old Fauchelevant himself said : "Monsieur Madeleine, go away ! I must die, so leave me ; you will be killed too."

Madeleine made no answer ; the spectators gasped, the wheels had sunk deeper, and it was now almost impossible for him to get out from under the cart. All at once the

enormous mass shook, the cart slowly rose, and the wheels half emerged from the rut. A stifled voice could be heard crying, "Make haste, help!" It was Madeleine, who had made a last effort. They rushed forward, for the devotion of one man had restored strength and courage to all. The cart was lifted by twenty arms, and old Fauchelevent was saved. Madeleine rose: he was livid, although dripping with perspiration: his clothes were torn and covered with mud. The old man kissed his knees, and called him his saviour, while Madeleine had on his face a strange expression of happy and celestial suffering, and turned his placid eye on Javert, who was still looking at him.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THIRTY-FIVE FRANCS SPENT IN MORALITY.

FAUCHELEVENT had put out his knee-cap in his fall, and Father Madeleine had him carried to an infirmary he had established for his workmen in his factory, and which was managed by two sisters of charity. The next morning the old man found a thousand-franc note by his bedside, with a line in M. Madeleine's handwriting, "Payment for your cart and horse, which I have bought:" the cart was smashed and the horse dead. Fauchelevent recovered, but his leg remained stiff, and hence M. Madeleine, by the recommendation of the sisters and his curé, procured him a situation as gardener at a convent in the St. Antoine quarter of Paris.

Some time after, M. Madeleine was appointed Mayor; the first time Javert saw him wearing the scarf which gave him all authority in the town, he felt that sort of excitement a dog would feel that scented a wolf in its master's clothes. From this moment he avoided him as much as he could, and when duty imperiously compelled him, and he could not do otherwise than appear



before the Mayor, he addressed him with profound respect.

The prosperity created in M—— by Father Madeleine had, in addition to the visible signs we have indicated, another symptom, which, though not visible, was not the less significant, for it is one that never deceives: when the population is suffering, when work is scarce and trade bad, tax-payers exhaust and exceed the time granted them, and the State spends a good deal of money in enforcing payment. When work abounds, when the country is happy and rich, the taxes are paid cheerfully, and cost the State little. We may say that wretchedness and the public exchequer have an infallible thermometer in the cost of collecting the taxes. In seven years these costs had been reduced three-fourths in the arrondissement of M——, which caused it to be frequently quoted by M. de Villele, at that time Minister of Finances.

Such was the state of the town when Fantine returned to it. No one remembered her, but luckily the door of M. Madeleine's factory was like a friendly face; she presented herself at it, and was admitted to the female shop. As the trade was quite new to Fantine, she was awkward at it and earned but small wages; but that was enough, for she had solved the problem—she was earning her livelihood. When Fantine saw that she could live by it, she had a moment of joy. To live honestly by her own toil, what a favour of Heaven! A taste for work really came back to her: she bought a looking-glass, delighted in seeing in it her youth, her fine hair and fine teeth; forgot many things, only thought of Cosette, and her possible future, and was almost happy. She hired a small room and furnished it, on credit, to be paid for out of her future earnings—this was a relic of her irregular habits.

Not being able to say that she was married, she was very careful not to drop a word about her child. At the outset, as we have seen, she punctually paid the Thénardiens, and as she could only sign her name, she

was compelled to write to them through the agency of a public writer. It was noticed that she wrote frequently. It was beginning to be whispered in the shop that Fantine "wrote letters," and was "carrying on."

Fantine was observed, and besides, more than one girl was jealous of her bright hair and white teeth. It was noticed that she often wiped away a tear in the shop; it was when she was thinking of her child, perhaps of the man she had loved. It is a painful labour to break off all the gloomy connecting links with the past. It was a fact that she wrote at least twice a month, and always to the same address, and paid the postage. They managed to obtain the address: "Monsieur Thénardier, Publican, Montfermeil." The public writer, who could not fill his stomach with wine without emptying his pocket of secrets, was made to talk at the wine-shop; and, in short, it was known that Fantine had a child. A gossip undertook a journey to Montfermeil, spoke to the Thénardiens, and on her return said, "I do not begrudge my five-and-thirty francs, for I have seen the child."

The gossip who did this was a Gorgon of the name of Madame Victurnien, guardian and portress of everybody's virtue. She was fifty-six years of age, and covered the mask of ugliness with the mask of old age. Astounding to say, this old woman had once been young; in her youth, in '93, she had married a monk, who escaped from the cloisters in a red cap, and passed over from the Bernardines to the Jacobins. She was dry, crabbed, sharp, thorny, and almost venomous, while remembering the monk whose widow she was and who had considerably tamed her. At the Restoration she had turned bigot, and so energetically that the priests forgave her her monk. She had a small estate which she left to a religious community, and she was very welcome at the Episcopal Palace of Arras. This Madame Victurnien, then, went to Montfermeil, and when she returned, said, "I have seen the child."

All this took time, and Fantine had been more than a

year at the factory, when one morning the forewoman handed her 50 francs in the Mayor's name, and told her that she was no longer engaged, and had better leave the town, so the Mayor said. It was in this very month that the Thénardiens, after asking for 12 francs instead of 7, raised a claim for 15 instead of 12. Fantine was startled; she could not leave the town, for she owed her rent and for her furniture, and 50 francs would not pay those debts. She stammered a few words of entreaty, but the forewoman intimated to her that she must leave the shop at once; moreover, Fantine was but an indifferent workwoman. Crushed by shame more than disgrace, she left the factory, and returned to her room: her fault, then, was now known to all! She did not feel the strength in her to say a word; she was advised to see the Mayor, but did not dare do so. The Mayor gave her 50 francs because he was kind, and discharged her because he was just; and she bowed her head to the sentence.

## CHAPTER VII.

### SUCCESS OF MADAME VICTURNIEN.

THE monk's widow, then, was good for something. M. Madeleine, however, knew nothing of all this; and they were combinations of events of which the world is full. M. Madeleine made it a rule hardly ever to enter the female workroom; he had placed at its head an old maid, whom the curé had given him, and he had entire confidence in her. She was really a respectable, firm, equitable, and just person, full of that charity which consists in giving, but not possessing to the same extent the charity which comprehends and pardons. M. Madeleine trusted to her in everything, for the best men are often forced to delegate their authority, and it was with this full power, and in the conviction she was acting rightly, that the forewoman tried, condemned, and exe-

cuted Fantine. As for the 50 francs, she had given them out of a sum M. Madeleine had given her for alms and helping the workwomen, and which she did not account for.

Fantine tried to get a servant's place in the town, and went from house to house, but no one would have anything to do with her. She could not leave the town, for the broker to whom she was in debt for her furniture—what furniture!—said to her, "If you go away, I will have you arrested as a thief." The landlord to whom she owed her rent, said to her, "You are young and pretty, you can pay." She divided the 50 francs between the landlord and the broker, gave back to the latter three-fourths of the goods, only retaining what was absolutely necessary, and found herself without work, without a trade, with only a bed, and still owing about 100 francs. She set to work making coarse shirts for the troops, and earned at this sixpence a day, her daughter costing her fourpence. It was at this moment she began to fall in arrears with the Thénardiens. An old woman, however, who lit her candle for her when she came in at nights, taught her the way to live in wretchedness. Behind living on little, there is living on nothing; there are two chambers—the first is obscure, the second quite dark.

Fantine learned how she could do entirely without fire in winter, how she must get rid of a bird that cost her a halfpenny every two days, how she could make a petticoat of her blanket and a blanket of her petticoat, and how candle can be saved by taking your meals by the light of the window opposite. We do not know all that certain weak beings, who have grown old in want and honesty, can get out of a halfpenny, and in the end it becomes a talent. Fantine acquired this sublime talent, and regained a little courage. At this period she said to a neighbour, "Nonsense, I say to myself; by only sleeping for five hours and working all the others at my needle, I shall always manage to earn bread, at any rate. And then, when you are sad, you eat less. Well!

suffering, anxiety, a little bread on one side and sorrow on the other, all will support me."

In this distress, it would have been a strange happiness to have had her daughter with her, and she thought of sending for her. But, what! make her share her denudation? and then she owed money to the Thénardiens! how was she to pay it and the travelling expenses? The old woman who had given her lessons in what may be called indigent life was a pious creature, poor, and charitable to the poor and even to the rich, who could just write her name, "Margeritte," and believed in God, which is knowledge. There are many such virtues down here, and one day they will be up above, for this life has a morrow.

At the beginning Fantine had been so ashamed that she did not dare go out. When she was in the streets, she perceived that people turned round to look at her and pointed to her. Every one stared at her, and no one bowed to her; the cold, bitter contempt of the passers-by passed through her flesh and her mind like an east wind. In small towns an unhappy girl seems to be naked beneath the sarcasm and curiosity of all. In Paris, at least, no one knows you, and that obscurity is a garment. Oh! how glad she would have been to be back in Paris. She must grow accustomed to disrespect, as she had done to poverty. Gradually she made up her mind, and after two or three months shook off her shame, and went as if nothing had occurred. "It is no matter to me," she said. She came and went, with head erect and with a bitter smile, and felt that she was growing impudent. Madame Victornien sometimes saw her pass from her window; she noticed the distress of "the creature whom she had made know her place," and congratulated herself. The wicked have a black happiness. Excessive labour fatigued Fantine, and the little dry cough she had grew worse. She sometimes said to her neighbour, "Marguerite, just feel how hot my hands are!" Still, in the morning, when she passed an old broken comb through her glorious hair,

which shone like floss silk, she had a minute of happy coquettishness.

She had been discharged towards the end of winter ; the next summer passed away, and winter returned. Short days and less work ; in winter there is no warmth, no light, no midday, for the evening is joined to the morning ; there is fog, twilight, the window is grey, and you cannot see clearly. The sky is like a dark vault, and the sun has the look of a poor man. It is a frightful season ; winter changes into stone the water of heaven and the heart of man. Her creditors pressed her, for Fantine was earning too little, and her debts had increased. The Thénardiens, being irregularly paid, constantly wrote her letters, whose contents afflicted her, and postage ruined her. One day they wrote her that little Cosette was quite naked, that she wanted a flannel skirt, and that the mother must send at least ten francs for the purpose. She crumpled the letter in her hands all day, and at nightfall went to a barber's at the corner of the street and removed her comb. Her splendid light hair fell down to her hips.

" What fine hair ! " the barber exclaimed.

" What will you give me for it ? " she asked.

" Ten francs."

" Cut it off."

She bought a skirt and sent it to the Thénardiens ; it made them furious, for they wanted the money. They gave it to Eponine, and the poor lark continued to shiver. Fantine thought, " My child is no longer cold, for I have dressed her in my hair." She wore small round caps which hid her shorn head, and she still looked pretty in them.

A dark change took place in Fantine's heart. When she found that she could no longer dress her hair, she began to hate all around her. She had long shared the universal veneration for Father Madeleine : but, through the constant iteration that he had discharged her and was the cause of her misfortune, she grew to hate him too, and worse than the rest. When she passed the

factory she pretended to laugh and sing. An old workman who once saw her doing so, said, "That's a girl who will come to a bad end." She took a lover, the first who offered, a man she did not love, through bravado and with rage in her heart. He was a scoundrel, a sort of mendicant musician, an idle scamp, who beat her, and left her, as she had chosen him, in disgust. She adored her child. The lower she sank, the darker the gloom became around her, the more did this sweet little angel gleam in her soul. She said: "When I am rich, I shall have my Cosette with me;" and she laughed. She did not get rid of her cough, and she felt a cold perspiration in her back.

One day she received from the Thénardiens a letter to the following effect: "Cosette is ill with a miliary fever, as they call it, which is very prevalent. She must have expensive drugs, and that ruins us, and we cannot pay for them any longer. If you do not send us forty francs within a week, the little one will be dead." She burst into a loud laugh, and said to her old neighbour, "Oh, what funny people! they want forty francs; where do they expect me to get them? What fools those peasants are!" Still, she went to a staircase window and read the letter again; then she went out into the street, still laughing and singing. Some one who met her said, "What has made you so merry?" and she answered, "It is a piece of stupidity some country folk have written; they want forty francs of me—the asses."

As she passed across the market-place she saw a crowd surrounding a vehicle of a strange shape, on the box of which a man dressed in red was haranguing. He was a dentist going his rounds, who offered the public complete sets of teeth, opiates, powders, and elixirs. Fantine joined the crowd and began laughing like the rest at this harangue, in which there was slang for the mob, and scientific jargon for respectable persons. The extractor of teeth saw the pretty girl laughing, and suddenly exclaimed,—

"You have fine teeth, my laughing beauty. If you

like to sell me your two top front teeth, I will give you a Napoleon a piece for them."

"What a horrible idea!" Fantine exclaimed.

"Two Napoleons!" an old toothless woman by her side grumbled, "there's a lucky girl."

Fantine ran away and stopped her ears not to hear the hoarse voice of the man, who shouted, "Think it over, my dear: two Napoleons may be useful. If your heart says Yes, come to-night to the *Tillac d'Argent*, where you will find me."

Fantine, when she reached home, was furious, and told her good neighbour Marguerite what had happened. "Can you understand it? is he not an abominable man? How can people like that be allowed to go about the country? Pull out my two front teeth! why I should look horrible; hair grows again, but teeth! oh, the monster! I would sooner throw myself head first out of a fifth-floor window on to the pavement."

"And what did he offer you?" Marguerite asked.

"Two Napoleons."

"That makes forty francs."

"Yes," said Fantine, "that makes forty francs."

She became thoughtful and sat down to her work. At the end of a quarter of an hour, she left the room and read Thénardier's letter again on the staircase. When she returned, she said to Marguerite,—

"Do you know what a miliary fever is?"

"Yes," said the old woman, "it is an illness."

"Does it require much medicine?"

"Oh, an awful lot."

"Does it attack children?"

"More than anybody."

"Do they die of it?"

"Plenty," said Marguerite.

Fantine went out and read the letter once again on the staircase. At night she went out, and could be seen proceeding in the direction of the Rue de Paris, where the inns are. The next morning, when Marguerite entered Fantine's room before daybreak, for they worked



together, and they made one candle do for them both, she found her sitting on her bed, pale and chill. Her cap had fallen on her knees, and the candle had been burning all night, and was nearly consumed. Marguerite stopped in the doorway, horrified by this enormous extravagance, and exclaimed,—

“Oh! Lord! the candle nearly burnt out! something must have happened.”

Then she looked at Fantine, who turned her close-shaven head towards her, and seemed to have grown ten years older since the previous day.

“Gracious Heaven!” said Marguerite, “what is the matter with you, Fantine?”

“Nothing,” the girl answered, “I am all right. My child will not die of that frightful disease for want of assistance, and I am satisfied.”

As she said this, she pointed to two Napoleons that glistened on the table.

“Oh! Lord,” said Marguerite; “why, ’tis a fortune; wherever did you get them from?”

“I had them by me,” Fantine answered.

At the same time she smiled, the candle lit up her face, and it was a fearful smile. A reddish saliva stained the corner of her lips, and she had a black hole in her mouth—the two teeth were pulled out. She sent the forty francs to Montfermeil. It had only been a trick of the Thénardiens to get money, for Cosette was not ill.

Fantine threw her looking-glass out of the window; she had long before left her cell on the second floor, for a garret under the roof—one of those tenements in which the ceiling forms an angle with the floor, and you knock your head at every step. The poor man can only go to the end of his room, as to the end of his destiny, by stooping more and more. She had no bed left; she had only a rag she called a blanket, a mattress on the ground, and a bottomless chair; a little rose-tree she had had withered away, forgotten in a corner. In another corner she had a pail to hold water, which froze in winter, and in which the different levels of the water remained marked

for a long time by rings of ice. She had lost her shame, and now lost her coquetry; the last sign was, that she went out with dirty caps. Either through want of time or carelessness, she no longer mended her linen, and as the heels of her stockings wore out, she tucked them into her shoes. She mended her worn-out gown with rags of calico, which tore away at the slightest movement. The people to whom she owed money made "scenes," and allowed her no rest: she met them in the street, she met them again on her stairs. Her eyes were very bright, and she felt a settled pain at the top of her left shoulder-blade, while she coughed frequently. She deeply hated Father Madeleine, and sewed for seventeen hours a day; but a speculator hired all the female prisoners, and reduced the prices of the free workmen to nine sous a day. Seventeen hours' work for nine sous! Her creditors were more pitiless than ever, and the broker, who had got back nearly all her furniture, incessantly said to her, "When are you going to pay me, you cheat?" What did they want of her, good Heavens! she felt herself tracked, and something of the wild beast was aroused in her. About the same time Thénardier wrote to her, that he had decidedly waited too patiently, and that unless he received one hundred francs at once, he would turn poor Cosette, who had scarce recovered, out of doors, into the cold, and she must do what she could or rot. "One hundred francs!" Fantine thought, "but where is the trade in which I can earn one hundred sous a day? Well! I will sell all that is left!"

And the unfortunate girl went on the streets.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### M. BAMATABOIS' AMUSEMENTS.

THERE is in all small towns, and there was at M—— in particular, a class of young men who squander fifteen

hundred francs a year in the provinces with the same air as their congeners in Paris devour two hundred thousand. They are beings of the great neutral species ; geldings, parasites, nobodies, who possess a little land, a little folly, and a little wit, who would be rustics in a drawing-room, and believe themselves gentlemen in a pot-house. They talk about my fields, my woods, my peasants, horses, the actresses, to prove themselves men of taste ; quarrel with the officers of the garrison, to prove themselves men of war, shoot, smoke, yawn, drink, smell of tobacco, play at billiards, watch the travellers get out of the stage coach, live at the café, dine at the inn, have a dog that gnaws bones under the table, and a mistress who places the dishes upon it ; haggle over a sou, exaggerate the fashions, admire tragedy, despise women, wear out their old boots, copy London through Paris, and Paris through Pont-à-Mousson ; grow stupidly old, do not work, are of no use, and do no great harm. Had M. Felix Tholomyès remained in his province and not seen Paris, he would have been one of them. If they were richer, people would say they are dandies ; if poorer, they are idle scamps ; but they are simply men without work. Among them there are bores and bored, dreamers, and a few scamps.

Eight or ten months after the events we have described in the previous chapter, toward the beginning of January, 1823, and on a night when snow had fallen, one of these dandies—a man of “right sentiments,” for he wore a Morillo, and was also warmly wrapped up in one of the large Spanish cloaks which at that time completed the fashionable costume in cold weather—was amusing himself by annoying a creature, who was prowling about in a low-necked ball dress and with flowers in her hair, before the window of the officers’ café. This dandy was smoking, as that was a decided mark of fashion. Each time this woman passed him, he made some remark to her, which he fancied witty and amusing, as : “How ugly you are !—Why don’t you go to kennel ?—You have no teeth,” etc., etc. This gentleman’s name was Mon-

sieur Bamatabois. The woman, a sad-dressed phantom walking backwards and forwards in the snow, made him no answer, did not even look at him, but still continued silently and with a gloomy regularity her walk, which every few minutes brought her under his sarcasms, like the condemned soldier running the gauntlet. The slight effect produced doubtless annoyed the idler, for taking advantage of her back being turned, he crept up behind her, stooped to pick up a handful of snow, and suddenly plunged it between her bare shoulders. The girl uttered a yell, turned, leapt like a panther on the man, and dug her nails into his face with the most frightful language that could fall from a guardroom into the gutter. These insults, vomited by a voice rendered hoarse by brandy, hideously issued from a mouth in which the two front teeth were really missing. It was Fantine.

At the noise, the officers left the café in a throng, the passers-by stopped, and a laughing, yelling, applauding circle was made round these two beings, in whom it was difficult to recognize a man and a woman—the man struggling, his hat on the ground, the woman striking with feet and fists, bareheaded, yelling, without teeth or hair, livid with passion, and horrible. All at once a tall man quickly broke through the crowd, seized the woman's satin dress, which was covered with mud, and said: "Follow me." The woman raised her hand, and her passionate voice suddenly died out. Her eyes were glassy, she grew pale instead of being livid, and trembled with fear—she had recognized Javert. The dandy profited by this incident to make his escape.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE POLICE OFFICE.

JAVERT broke through the circle and began walking with long strides toward the police office, which is at the

other end of the market-place, dragging the wretched girl after him. She allowed him to do so mechanically, and neither he nor she said a word. The crowd of spectators, in a paroxysm of delight, followed them with coarse jokes, for supreme misery is an occasion for obscenities. On reaching the police office, which was a low room, heated by a stove, and guarded by a sentry, and having a barred glass door opening on the street, Javert walked in with Fantine, and shut the door after him, to the great disappointment of the curious, who stood on tip-top, and stretched out their necks in front of the dirty window trying to see. Curiosity is gluttony, and seeing is devouring.

On entering, Fantine crouched down motionless in a corner like a frightened dog. The sergeant on duty brought in a candle. Javert sat down at a table, took a sheet of stamped paper from his pocket, and began writing. Women of this class are by the French laws left entirely at the discretion of the police; they do what they like with them, punish them as they think proper, and confiscate the two sad things which they call their trade and their liberty. Javert was stoical: his grave face displayed no emotion, and yet he was seriously and deeply preoccupied. It was one of those moments in which he exercised without control, but with all the scruples of a strict conscience, his formidable discretionary power. At this instant he felt that his high stool was a tribunal, and himself the judge. He tried and he condemned; he summoned all the ideas he had in his mind round the great thing he was doing. The more he examined the girl's deed, the more outraged he felt: for it was evident that he had just seen a crime committed. He had seen in the street, society, represented by a householder and elector, insulted and attacked by a creature beyond the pale of everything. A prostitute had assaulted a citizen, and he, Javert, had witnessed it. He wrote on silently. When he had finished, he affixed his signature, folded up the paper, and said to the sergeant as he handed it to him: "Take these men and

lead this girl to prison." Then he turned to Fantine, "You will have six months for it."

The wretched girl started.

"Six months, six months' imprisonment!" she cried; "six months! and only earn seven sous a day! Why, what will become of Cosette, my child, my child! Why, I owe more than 100 francs to Thénardier, M. Inspector, do you know that?"

She dragged herself across the floor, dirtied by the muddy boots of all these men, without rising, with clasped hands and taking long strides with her knees.

"Monsieur Javert," she said, "I ask for mercy. I assure you that I was not in the wrong; if you had seen the beginning, you would say so: I swear by our Saviour that I was not to blame. That gentleman, who was a stranger to me, put snow down my back; had he any right to do that when I was passing gently, and doing nobody a harm? It sent me wild, for you must know I am not very well, and besides he had been abusing me—'You are ugly, you have no teeth.' I am well aware that I have lost my teeth. I did nothing, and said to myself, 'This gentleman is amusing himself.' I was civil to him, and said nothing, and it was at this moment he put the snow down my back. My good M. Javert, is there no one who saw it to tell you that this is the truth? I was, perhaps, wrong to get into a passion, but at the moment, as you are aware, people are not masters of themselves, and I am quick-tempered. And then, something so cold put down your back, at a moment when you are least expecting it! It was wrong to destroy the gentleman's hat, but why has he gone away? I would ask his pardon. Oh! I would willingly do so. Let me off this time. M. Javert, perhaps you do not know that in prison you can only earn seven sous a day. It is not the fault of Government, but you only earn seven sous; and just fancy! I have one hundred francs to pay, or my child will be turned into the street. Oh! I cannot have her with me, for my mode of life is so bad! Oh my Cosette, oh my little angel. what ever will be-

come of you, poor darling ! I must tell you that the Thénardièrs are innkeepers, peasants, and unreasonable ; they insist on having their money. Oh, do not send me to prison. Look you, the little thing will be turned into the streets in the middle of winter to go where she likes, and you must take pity on that, my kind M. Javert. If she were older she could earn her living, but at her age it is impossible. I am not a bad woman at heart, it is not cowardice and gluttony that have made me what I am. If I drink brandy, it is through wretchedness ; I do not like it, but it makes me reckless. In happier times you need only have looked into my chest of drawers, and you would have seen that I was not a disorderly woman, for I had linen, plenty of linen. Take pity on me, M. Javert."

She spoke thus, crushed, shaken by sobs, blinded by tears, wringing her hands, interrupted by a sharp, dry cough, and stammering softly, with death in her voice. Great sorrow is a divine and terrible ray which transfigures the wretched, and at this moment Fantine became lovely again. From time to time she stopped, and tenderly kissed the skirt of the policeman's coat. She would have melted a heart of granite—but a wooden heart cannot be moved.

"Well," said Javert, "I have listened to you. Have you said all ? Be off now, you have six months. The Eternal Father in person could not alter it."

On hearing this solemn phrase, she understood that sentence was passed ; she fell all of a heap, murmuring, "Mercy !" But Javert turned his back, and the soldiers seized her arm. Some minutes previously a man had entered unnoticed, he had closed the door, leant against it, and heard Fantine's desperate entreaties. At the moment when the soldiers laid hold of the unhappy girl, who would not rise, he emerged from the gloom, and said,—

"Wait a minute, if you please."

Javert raised his eyes, and recognized M. Madeleine ; he took off his hat, and bowed with a sort of vexed awkwardness.

"I beg your pardon, M. le Maire——"

The words "M. le Maire" produced a strange effect on Fantine: she sprang up like a spectre emerging from the ground, thrust back the soldiers, walked straight up to M. Madeleine, before she could be prevented, and looking at him wildly, she exclaimed,—

"So you are the Mayor?"

Then she burst into a laugh, and spat in his face. M. Madeleine wiped his face, and said,—

"Inspector Javert, set this woman at liberty."

Javert felt for a moment as if he were going mad; he experienced at this instant the most violent emotions he had ever felt in his life, following each other in rapid succession, and almost mingled. To see a girl of the town spit in the Mayor's face was so monstrous a thing that he would have regarded it as sacrilege even to believe it possible. On the other side, he confusedly made a hideous approximation in his mind between what this woman was and what this Mayor might be, and then he saw with horror something perfectly simple in this prodigious assault. But when he saw this Mayor, this magistrate, calmly wipe his face, and say, "Set this woman at liberty," he had a bedazzlement of stupor, so to speak; thought and language failed him equally, for he had passed the limits of possible amazement. He remained dumb. His sentence had produced an equally strange effect on Fantine: she raised her bare arm, and clung to the chimney-key of the stove like a tottering person. She looked around, and began saying in a low voice, as if speaking to herself,—

"At liberty! I am to be let go! I shall not be sent to prison for six months! Who said that? it is impossible that any one said it. I must have heard badly; it cannot be that monster of a Mayor. Was it you, my kind M. Javert, who said that I was to be set at liberty? Well, I will tell you all about it, and you will let me go. That monster of a Mayor, that old villain of a Mayor, is the cause of it all. Just imagine, M. Javert, he discharged me on account of a parcel of sluts gossiping in



the shop. Was not that horrible ! to discharge a poor girl who is doing her work fairly ! After that I did not earn enough, and all this misfortune came. In the first place, there is an improvement which the police gentry ought to make, and that is to prevent persons in prison injuring poor people. I will explain this to you : you earn twelve sous for making a shirt, but it falls to seven, and then you can no longer live, and are obliged to do what you can. As I had my little Cosette I was forced to become a bad woman. You can now understand how it was that beggar of a Mayor who did all the mischief. My present offence is that I trampled on the gentleman's hat before the officers' café, but he had ruined my dress with snow ; and our sort have only one silk dress for night. Indeed, M. Javert, I never did any harm purposely, and I see everywhere much worse women than myself who are much more fortunate. Oh, Monsieur Javert, you said that I was to be set at liberty, did you not ? Make inquiries, speak to my landlord ; I pay my rent now, and you will hear that I am honest. Oh, good gracious ! I ask your pardon, but I have touched the key of the stove without noticing it, and made a smoke."

M. Madeleine listened to her with deep attention. While she was talking, he took out his purse, but as he found it empty on opening it, he returned it to his pocket. He now said to Fantine,—

"How much did you say that you owed ? "

Fantine, who was looking at Javert, turned round to him :—

"Am I speaking to you ? "

Then she said to the soldiers,—

"Tell me, men, did you see how I spat in his face ?— Ah, you old villain of a Mayor, you have come here to frighten me, but I am not afraid of you ; I am only afraid of M. Javert, my kind Monsieur Javert."

While saying this, she turned again to the Inspector,—

"After all, people should be just. I can understand that you are a just man, M. Javert ; in fact, it is quite simple ;

a man who played at putting snow down a woman's back, made the officers laugh; they must have some amusement, and we girls are sent into the world for them to make fun of. And then you came up; you are compelled to restore order, you remove the woman who was in the wrong, but, on reflection, as you are kind-hearted, you order me to be set at liberty, for the sake of my little girl, for six months' imprisonment would prevent my supporting her. But don't come here again, faggot! Oh, I will not come here again, M. Javert; they can do what they like to me in future, and I will not stir. Still, I cried out to-night because it hurt me; I did not at all expect that gentleman's snow; and then besides, as I told you, I am not very well—I cough, I have a ball in my stomach which burns, and the doctor says: 'Take care of yourself.' Here, feel, give me your hand; do not be frightened."

She no longer cried, her voice was caressing; she laid Javert's large, coarse hand on her white, delicate throat, and looked up at him smilingly. All at once she hurriedly repaired the disorder in her clothes, let the folds of her dress fall, which had been almost dragged up to her knee, and walked toward the door, saying to the soldiers with a friendly nod,—

"My lads, M. Javert says I may go, so I will be off."

She laid her hand on the hasp; one step further, and she would be in the street. Up to this moment Javert had stood motionless, with his eyes fixed on the ground, appearing in the centre of this scene like a statue waiting to be put up in its proper place. The sound of the hasp aroused him: he raised his head with an expression of sovereign authority—an expression the more frightful, the lower the man in power stands; it is ferocity in the wild beast, atrocity in the nobody.

"Sergeant," he shouted, "do you not see that the wench is bolting? Who told you to let her go?"

"I did," said Madeleine.

Fantine, at the sound of Javert's voice, trembled, and let go the hasp, like a detected thief lets fall the stolen

article. At Madeleine's voice she turned, and from this moment, without uttering a word, without even daring to breathe freely, her eye wandered from Madeleine to Javert, and from Javert to Madeleine, according as each spoke. It was evident that Javert must have been "lifted off the hooks," as people say, when he ventured to address the sergeant as he had done, after the Mayor's request that Fantin<sup>e</sup> should be set at liberty. Had he gone so far as to forget the Mayor's presence? Did he eventually declare to himself that it was impossible for "an authority" to have given such an order and that the Mayor must certainly have said one thing for another without meaning it? Or was it that, in the presence of all the enormities he had witnessed during the last two hours, he said to himself that he must have recourse to a supreme resolution, that the little must become great, the detective be transformed into the magistrate, and that, in this prodigious extremity, order, law, morality, government, and society were personified in him, Javert? However this may be, when M. Madeleine said "I did," the Inspector of Police could be seen to turn to the Mayor, pale, cold, with blue lips, with a desperate glance, and an imperceptible tremor all over him, and, extraordinary circumstance! to say to him, with downcast eye, but in a fierce voice,—

"Monsieur le Maire, that cannot be."

"Why so?"

"This creature has insulted a gentleman."

"Inspector Javert," M. Madeleine replied with a conciliating and calm accent, "listen to me. You are an honest man, and I shall have no difficulty in coming to an explanation with you. The truth is as follows: I was crossing the market-place at the time you were leading this girl away, a crowd was still assembled, I inquired, and know all; the man was in the wrong, and, in common justice, ought to have been arrested instead of her."

Javert objected,—

"The wretched creature has just insulted M. le Maire."

"That concerns myself," M. Madeleine said; "my insult is, perhaps, my own, and I can do what I like with it."

"I ask your pardon, sir; the insult does not belong to you, but to the Judicial Court."

"Inspector Javert," Madeleine replied, "conscience is the highest of all courts. I have heard the woman, and know what I am doing."

"And I, Monsieur le Maire, do not know what I am seeing."

"In that case, be content with obeying."

"I obey my duty; my duty orders that this woman should go to prison for six months."

M. Madeleine answered gently, —

"Listen to this carefully: she will not go for a single day."

On hearing these decided words, Javert ventured to look fixedly at the Mayor, and said to him, though still with a respectful accent, —

"I bitterly regret being compelled to resist you. Monsieur le Maire, it is the first time in my life, but you will deign to let me observe that I am within the limits of my authority. As you wish it, sir, I will confine myself to the affair with the gentleman. I was present; this girl attacked M. Bamatabois, who is an elector and owner of that fine three-storeyed house, built of hewn stone, which forms the corner of the Esplanade. Well, there are things in this world! However this may be, M. le Maire, this is a matter of the street police which concerns me, and I intend to punish the woman Fantine."

M. Madeleine upon this folded his arms, and said in a stern voice, which no one in the town had ever heard before, —

"The affair to which you allude belongs to the Borough police; and by the terms of articles nine, eleven, fifteen, and sixty-six of the Criminal Code, I try it. I order that this woman is to be set at liberty."

Javert tried a final effort.

"But, Monsieur le Maire——"

"I call your attention to article eighty-one of the law of Dec. 13th, 1799, upon arbitrary detention."

"Permit me, sir——"

"Not a word!"

"Still——"

"Leave the room!" said M. Madeleine.

Javert received the blow right in his chest like a Russian soldier; he bowed down to the ground to the Mayor, and went out. Fantine stood up against the door, and watched him pass by her in stupor. She too was suffering from a strange perturbation: for she had seen herself, so to speak, contended for by two opposite powers. She had seen two men struggling in her presence, who held in their hands her liberty, her life, her soul, her child. One of these men dragged her towards the gloom, the other restored her to the light. In this struggle, which she gazed at through the exaggeration of terror, the two men seemed to her giants—one spoke like a demon, the other like her good angel. The angel had vanquished the demon, and the thing which made her shudder from head to foot was that this angel, this liberator, was the very man whom she abhorred, the Mayor whom she had so long regarded as the cause of all her woes; and at the very moment when she had insulted him in such a hideous way he saved her. Could she be mistaken? must she change her whole soul? She did not know, but she trembled; she listened wildly, she looked on with terror, and at every word that M. Madeleine said, she felt the darkness of hatred fade away in her heart, and something glowing and ineffable spring up in its place, which was composed of joy, confidence, and love. When Javert had left the room, M. Madeleine turned to her, and said in a slow voice, like a serious man who is making an effort to restrain his tears,—

"I have heard your story. I knew nothing about what you have said, but I believe, I feel, that it is true. I was even ignorant that you had left the factory, but why did you not apply to me? This is what I will do

for you : I will pay your debts and send for your child or you can go to it. You can live here, in Paris, or wherever you please, and I will provide for your child and yourself. I will give you all the money you require, and you will become respectable again in becoming happy. And I will say more than that : if all be as you say, and I do not doubt it, you have never ceased to be virtuous and holy in the sight of God ! Poor woman ! ”

This was more than poor Fantine could endure. To have her Cosette ! to leave this infamous life ! to live free, rich, happy, and respectable with Cosette ! to see all these realities of Paradise suddenly burst into flower, in the midst of her wretchedness ! She looked as if stunned at the person who was speaking, and could only sob two or three times : “ Oh, oh, oh ! ” Her legs gave way, she fell on her knees before M. Madeleine, and before he could prevent it, he felt her seize his hand and press her lips to it.

Then she fainted.

## BOOK VI.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE COMMENCEMENT OF REPOSE.

M. MADELEINE had Fantine conveyed to the infirmary he had established in his own house, and intrusted her to the sisters, who put her to bed. A violent fever had broken out ; she spent a part of the night in raving and talking aloud, but at length fell asleep. On the morrow, at about mid-day, Fantine woke, and hearing a breathing close to her bed, she drew the curtain aside, and noticed M. Madeleine gazing at something above her head. His glance was full of pity and agony, and supplicated : she followed its direction, and saw that it was fixed on a crucifix nailed to the wall. M. Madeleine was now transfigured in Fantine's eyes, and seemed to her surrounded by light. He was absorbed in a species of prayer, and she looked at him for some time without daring to interrupt him, but at length said, timidly,—

“What are you doing there ?”

M. Madeleine had been standing at this spot for an hour, waiting till Fantine should wake. He took her hand, felt her pulse, and answered,—

“How are you ?”

“Very comfortable. I have slept, and fancy I am better. It will be nothing.”

He continued answering the question she had asked him first, and as if he had only just heard it,—

"I was praying to the Martyr up there;" and he mentally added, "for the Martyr down here."

M. Madeleine had spent the night and morning in making inquiries, and had learnt everything; he knew all the poignant details of Fantine's history. He continued,—

"You have suffered deeply, poor mother. Oh! do not complain, for you have at present the dowry of the elect: it is in this way that human beings become angels. It is not their fault; they do not know what to do otherwise. The hell you have now left is the anteroom to heaven, and you were obliged to begin with that."

He breathed a deep sigh, but she smiled upon him with the sublime smile in which two teeth were wanting. Javert had written a letter during the past night, and posted it himself the next morning. It was for Paris, and the address was: "Monsieur Chabouillet, Secretary to the Prefect of Police." As a rumour had spread about the affair in the police-office, the lady-manager of the post, and some other persons who saw the letter before it was sent off and recognized Javert's handwriting, supposed that he was sending in his resignation. M. Madeleine hastened to write to the Thénardiens. Fantine owed them over 120 francs, and he sent them 300, bidding them pay themselves out of the amount, and bring the child at once to M——, where a sick mother was awaiting it. This dazzled Thénardier. "Hang it all," he said to his wife, "we must not let the brat go, for the lark will become a milch cow for us. I see it all: some fellow has fallen in love with the mother." He replied by sending a bill for 500 and odd francs very well drawn up. In this bill two undeniable amounts figure, one from a physician, the other from an apothecary, who had attended Eponine and Azelma in a long illness. Cosette, as we said, had not been ill, and hence it was merely a little substitution of names. At the bottom of the bill Thénardier gave credit for 300 francs received on account. M. Madeleine at once sent 300 francs more, and wrote, "Make haste and bring Cosette."



"Christi!" said Thénardier, "we must not let the child go."

In the meanwhile Fantine did not recover, and still remained in the infirmary. The sisters had at first received and nursed "this girl" with some repugnance; any one who has seen the bas-relief at Rheims will remember the pouting lower lip of the wise virgins looking at the foolish virgins. This ancient contempt of Vestals for frailer women is one of the deepest instincts of the feminine dignity, and the sisters had experienced it, with the increased dislike which religion adds. But in a few days Fantine disarmed them; she had all sorts of humble and gentle words, and the mother within her was touching. One day the sisters heard her say in the paroxysm of fever, "I have been a sinner, but when I have my child by my side, that will show that God has forgiven me. While I was living badly, I should not have liked to have Cosette with me, for I could not have endured her sad and astonished eyes. And yet it was for her sake that I did wrong, and for that reason God pardons me. I shall feel the blessing of Heaven when Cosette is here; I shall look at her, and it will do me good to see the innocent creature. She knows nothing, as she is an angel. My sisters, at her age the wings have not yet dropped off."

M. Madeleine went to see her twice a day, and every time she asked him, "Shall I see my Cosette soon?"

He would answer,—

"To-morrow, perhaps; she can arrive at any moment, for I am expecting her."

And the mother's pale face would grow radiant.

"Oh!" she said, "how happy I shall be!"

We have said that she did not improve; on the contrary, her condition seemed to grow worse week by week. The handful of snow placed between her naked shoulder-blades produced a sudden check of perspiration, which caused the illness that had smouldered in her for years suddenly to break out. The physician sounded Fantine's chest, and shook his head. M. Madeleine said to him,—

"Well?"

"Has she not a child that she wishes to see?" asked the doctor.

"Yes."

"Well, make haste to send for her."

Madeleine gave a start, and Fantine asked him,—

"What did the doctor say to you?"

M. Madeleine forced a smile.

"He said that your child must come at once, for that would cure you."

"Oh," she replied, "he is right; but what do those Thénardiers mean by keeping my Cosette? Oh, she will come, and then I shall see happiness close to me."

Thénardier, however, would not let the child go, and alleged a hundred poor excuses. Cosette was ailing, and it would be dangerous for her to travel in winter, and, then there were some small debts still to pay, which he was collecting, etc.

"I will send some one to fetch Cosette," said Father Madeleine; "if necessary I will go myself."

He wrote to Fantine's dictation the following letter, which she signed:

"M. THÉNARDIER,—You will hand over Cosette to the bearer, who will settle up all little matters.—Yours,  
"FANTINE."

About this time, a great incident happened. However cleverly we may have carved the mysterious block of which our life is made, the black vein of destiny ever reappears in it.

## CHAPTER II.

### HOW "JEAN" MAY BECOME "CHAMP."

ONE morning M. Madeleine was in his study, engaged in settling some pressing mayoralty matters, in case he decided on the journey to Montfermeil, when he was

told that Inspector Javert wished to speak with him. On hearing this name pronounced, M. Madeleine could not refrain from a disagreeable impression. Since the guardroom adventure Javert had avoided him more than ever, and M. Madeleine had not seen him again.

"Show him in," he said.

Javert entered. M. Madeleine remained at his table near the fireplace with a pen in his hand and his eyes fixed on a charge book, whose leaves he was turning over and annotating. He did not put himself out of the way for Javert, for he could not refrain from thinking of poor Fantine. Javert bowed respectfully to the Mayor, who had his back turned to him; the Mayor did not look at him, but continued to make his notes. Javert walked a little way into the study, and then halted without a word. A physiognomist familiar with Javert's nature, and who had studied for any length of time this savage in the service of civilization—this strange composite of the Roman, the Spartan, the monk, and the corporal, this spy incapable of falsehood, this virgin detective—a physiognomist aware of his secret and old aversion for M. Madeleine, and his conflict with him about Fantine, and who regarded Javert at this moment, would have asked himself, What has happened? It was evident to any one who knew this upright, clear, sincere, honest, austere, and ferocious conscience, that Javert had just emerged from some great internal struggle. Javert had nothing in his mind which he did not also have in his face, and, like all violent men, he was subject to sudden changes. Never had his face been stranger or more unexpected. On entering, he bowed to M. Madeleine with a look in which there was neither rancour, anger, nor suspicion; he had halted a few yards behind the Mayor's chair, and was now standing there in an almost military attitude, with the simple, cold rudeness of a man who has never been gentle and has ever been patient. He was waiting, without saying a word, without making a movement, in a true humility and tranquil resignation, till the Mayor might think

proper to turn round—calm, serious, hat in hand, and with an expression which was half way between the private before his officer and the culprit before the judge. All the feelings as well as all the resolutions he might be supposed to possess had disappeared : there was nothing but a gloomy sadness on this face, which was impenetrable and simple as granite. His whole person displayed humiliation and firmness, and a sort of courageous despondency. At length the Mayor laid down his pen and half turned round.

"Well, what is the matter, Javert ?"

Javert remained silent for a moment, as if reflecting, and then raised his voice with a sad solemnity, which, however, did not exclude simplicity.

"A culpable deed has been committed, sir."

"What deed ?"

"An inferior agent of authority has failed in his respect to a magistrate in the gravest matter. I have come, as is my duty, to bring the fact to your knowledge."

"Who is this agent ?" M. Madeleine asked.

"Myself."

"And who is the magistrate who has cause to complain of the agent ?"

"You, Monsieur le Maire."

M. Madeleine sat up, and Javert continued with a stern air and still looking down,—

"Monsieur le Maire, I have come to request that you will procure my dismissal from the service."

M. Madeleine in his stupefaction opened his mouth, but Javert interrupted him,—

"You will say that I could have sent in my resignation, but that is not enough. Such a course is honourable, but I have done wrong, and deserve punishment. I must be discharged."

And after a pause he added,—

"Monsieur le Maire, you were severe to me the other day unjustly, be so to-day justly."

"What is the meaning of all this nonsense ?" M. Madeleine exclaimed ; "what is the culpable act you

have committed? what have you done to me? You accuse yourself, you wish to be removed——”

“Discharged,” said Javert.

“Very good, discharged. I do not understand it.”

“You shall do so, sir.”

Javert heaved a deep sigh, and continued still coldly and sadly,—

“Six weeks ago, M. le Maire, after the scene about that girl, I was furious, and denounced you.”

“Denounced me?”

“To the Prefect of Police at Paris.”

M. Madeleine, who did not laugh much oftener than Javert, burst into a laugh.

“As a Mayor who had encroached on the police?”

“As an ex-galley slave.”

The Mayor turned livid, but Javert, who had not raised his eyes, continued,—

“I thought you were so, and have had these notions for a long time. A resemblance, information you sought at Faverolles, the strength of your loins, the adventures with old Fauchelevent, your skill in firing, your leg which halts a little—and so on. It was very absurd, but I took you for a man of the name of Jean Valjean.”

“What name did you say?”

“Jean Valjean; he is a convict I saw twenty years ago when I was assistant keeper at the Toulon *bagne*. On leaving the galley, this Valjean, as it appears, robbed a bishop, and then committed a highway robbery on a little Savoyard. For eight years he has been out of the way and could not be found, and I imagined—in a word, I did as I said. Passion decided me, and I denounced you to the Prefect.”

M. Madeleine, who had taken up the charge book again, said with a careless accent,—

“And what was the answer you received?”

“That I was mad!”

“Well?”

“They were right.”

“It is fortunate that you allow it.”

"I must do so, for the real Jean Valjean has been found."

The book M. Madeleine was holding fell from his grasp, he raised his head, looked searchingly at Javert, and said with an indescribable accent,—

"Oh!"

Javert continued,—

"The facts are as follow, M. le Maire. It seems that there was over at Ailly le Haut Cloche an old fellow who was called Father Champmathieu. He was very wretched, and no attention was paid to him, for no one knows how such people live. This autumn Father Champmathieu was arrested for stealing cider apples: there was a robbery, a wall climbed over, and branches broken. This Champmathieu was arrested with the branch still in his hand, and was locked up. Up to this point it is only a matter for a police court, but here Providence interposes. As the lock-up was under repair, the Magistrates ordered that Champmathieu should be taken to the departmental prison at Arras. In this prison there is an ex-convict of the name of Brevet, under imprisonment for some offence, and he has been made room-turnkey for his good behaviour. Champmathieu no sooner arrived than Brevet cries out, 'Why, I know this man: he is an ex-convict. Look at me, old fellow: you are Jean Valjean.' 'What do you mean?' says Champmathieu, affecting surprise. 'Don't play the humbug with me,' says Brevet, 'you are Jean Valjean. You were at the Toulon bagne twenty years ago, and I was there too.' Champmathieu denied identity, and, as you may suppose, the affair was thoroughly investigated, with the following result. This Champmathieu about thirty years ago was a journeyman wood-cutter at several places, especially at Faverolles, where his trail is lost. A long time after he is found again in Auvergne, and then in Paris, where he says he was a blacksmith, and had a daughter a washerwoman—though there is no evidence of this—and lastly, he turned up in these parts. Now, before being sent to the galleys,

what was Jean Valjean? a wood-cutter: where? at Faverolles. And here is another fact: this Valjean's Christian name was Jean, and his mother's family name Mathieu. What is more natural to suppose than that on leaving the *bagne* he assumed his mother's name as a disguise, and called himself Jean Mathieu? He went to Auvergne, where Jean is pronounced Chan, and thus he was transformed into Champmathieu. You are following me, I suppose? Inquiries have been made at Faverolles, but Jean Valjean's family is no longer there, and no one knows where it has gone. As you are aware, in those places families frequently disappear in such a way; these people, if they are not mud, are dust. And then, again, as the beginning of this story dates back thirty years, there is no one in Faverolles who knew Jean Valjean; and besides Brevet, there are only two convicts who remember him. These two were brought from the *bagne* and confronted with the pretended Champmathieu, and they did not hesitate for a moment. The same age—fifty-four; the same height, the same look, the same man, in short. It was at this very moment that I sent my denunciation to Paris, and the answer I received was that I had lost my senses, for Jean Valjean was in the hands of justice at Arras. You can conceive that this surprised me, as I fancied that I held my Jean Valjean here. I wrote to the magistrates, who sent for me, and Champmathieu was brought in."

"Well?" M. Madeleine interrupted him.

Javert answered with his incorruptible and sad face,—

"Monsieur le Maire, truth is truth: I am sorry, but that man is Jean Valjean: I recognized him too."

M. Madeleine said in a very low voice,—

"Are you sure?"

Javert burst into that sorrowful laugh which escapes from a profound conviction,—

"Oh! certain."

He stood for a moment pensive, mechanically taking

pinches of sawdust out of the sprinkler in the inkstand, and added,—

“ And now that I have seen the real Jean Valjean, I cannot understand how I could have believed anything else. I ask your pardon, M. le Maire.”

While addressing these supplicating words to the person who six weeks previously had humiliated him so deeply and bidden him leave the room, this haughty man was unconsciously full of dignity and simplicity. M. Madeleine merely answered his entreaty with the hurried question,—

“ And what does this man say ? ”

“ Well, Monsieur le Maire, it is an ugly business, for if he is Jean Valjean, he is an escaped convict. Scaling a wall, breaking a branch, and stealing apples is a peccadillo with a child, an offence in a man, but a crime in a convict. It is no longer a matter for the police courts, but for the assizes ; it is no longer imprisonment for a few days, but the galleys for life. And there is the matter with the Savoyard, which, I trust, will be brought up again. There is enough to settle a man, is there not ? but Jean Valjean is artful, and in that I recognize him too. Any other man would find it warm ; he would struggle, cry out, refuse to be Jean Valjean, and so on. He pretends, though, not to understand, and says, ‘ I am Champmathieu, and I shall stick to it.’ He has a look of amazement, and plays the brute beast, which is better. Oh ! he is a clever scoundrel ! But no matter, the proofs are ready to hand ; he has been recognized by four persons, and the old scoundrel will be found guilty. He is to be tried at Arras assizes, and I have been summoned as a witness.”

M. Madeleine had turned round to his desk again, taken up his charge book, and was quietly turning over the leaves, and busily reading and writing in turn. He now said to the Inspector,—

“ Enough, Javert ; after all, these details interest me but very slightly ; we are losing our time, and have a deal of work before us. Javert, you will go at once to Mother Busaupied, who sells vegetables at the corner of



the Rue Saint Saulve, and tell her to take out a summons against Pierre, the carter; he is a brutal fellow, who almost drove over this woman and her child, and he must be punished. You will then go to M. Charcillay in the Rue Champigny; he complains that there is a gutter next door which leaks, and is shaking the foundation of his house. But I am giving you a deal to do, and I think you said you were going away. Did you not state you were going to Arras on this matter in a week or ten days?"

"Sooner than that, sir."

"On what day, then?"

"I fancied I told you that the trial comes off to-morrow, and that I should start by to-night's coach."

"And how long will the trial last?"

"A day at the most, and sentence will be passed to-morrow night at the latest. But I shall not wait for that, but return so soon as I have given my evidence."

"Very good," said M. Madeleine, and he dismissed Javert with a wave of his hand. But he did not go.

"I beg your pardon, M. le Maire," he said.

"What's the matter now?" M. Madeleine asked.

"I have one thing to remind you of, sir."

"What is it?"

"That I must be discharged."

M. Madeleine rose.

"Javert, you are a man of honour, and I esteem you; you exaggerate your fault, and besides, this is an offence which concerns me. Javert, you are worthy of rising, not of sinking, and I insist on your keeping your situation."

Javert looked at M. Madeleine with his bright eyes, in which it seemed as if his unenlightened but rigid and chaste conscience could be seen, and he said quietly,—

"M. le Maire, I cannot allow it."

"I repeat," M. Madeleine replied, "that the affair concerns myself."

But Javert, only attending to his own thoughts, continued,—

"As for exaggerating, I am not doing so, for this is how I reason. I suspected you unjustly; that is nothing; it is the duty of men like myself to suspect, though there is an abuse in suspecting those above us. But without proofs, in a moment of passion, and for the purpose of revenge, I denounced you, a respectable man, a mayor and a magistrate; this is serious, very serious; I, an agent of the authority, insulted that authority in your person. Had any of my subordinates done what I have done, I should have declared him unworthy of the service and discharged him. Stay, Monsieur le Maire, one word more. I have often been severe in my life to others, for it was just, and I was doing my duty, and if I were not severe to myself now, all the justice I have done would become injustice. Ought I to spare myself more than others? No. What! I have been only good to punish others and not myself? Why, I should be a scoundrel, and the people who call me that rogue of a Javert would be in the right! M. le Maire, I do not wish you to treat me with kindness, for your kindness caused me sufficient ill-blood when dealt to others, and I want none for myself. The kindness that consists in defending the street-walker against the gentleman, the police agent against the Mayor, the lower classes against the higher, is what I call bad kindness, and it is such kindness that disorganizes society. Good Lord! it is easy enough to be good, but the difficulty is to be just. Come! if you had been what I believed you, I should not have been kind to you, as you would have seen. M. le Maire, I am bound to treat myself as I would treat another man; when I repressed malefactors, when I was severe with scamps, I often said to myself, 'If you ever catch yourself tripping, look out.' I have tripped, I have committed a fault, and all the worse for me. I have strong arms and will turn labourer. M. le Maire, the good of the service requires an example. I simply demand the discharge of Inspector Javert."

All this was said with a humble, proud, despairing, and convinced accent, which gave a peculiar grandeur to this strangely honest man.

"We will see," said M. Madeleine, and he offered him his hand, but Javert fell back, and said sternly,—

"Pardon me, sir, but that must not be ; a mayor ought not to give his hand to a spy."

He added between his teeth,—

"Yes, a spy ; from the moment when I misused my authority, I have been only a spy."

Then he bowed deeply and walked to the door. When he reached it he turned round and said, with eyes still bent on the ground,—

"M. le Maire, I will continue on duty till my place is filled up."

He went out. M. Madeleine thoughtfully listened to his firm, sure step as he walked along the paved passage.

## BOOK VII.

### CHAPTER I.

#### SISTER SIMPLICE.

THE incidents we are about to record were only partially known at M——, but the few which were known left such a memory in that town, that it would be a serious gap in this book if we did not tell them in their smallest details. In these details the reader will notice two or three improbable circumstances, which we retain through respect for truth. In the afternoon that followed Javert's visit, M. Madeleine went to see Fantine as usual; but before going to her he asked for Sister Simplicie. The two nuns who managed the infirmary, who were Lazarets, like all sisters of charity, were known by the names of Sisters Perpetua and Simplicie. Sister Perpetua was an ordinary village girl, a clumsy sister of charity, who had entered the service of Heaven just as she would have taken a cook's place. This type is not rare, for the Monastic orders gladly accept this clumsy peasant clay, which can be easily fashioned into a Capuchin friar or an Ursuline nun; and these rusticities were employed in the heavy work of devotion. The transition from a drover to a Carmelite is no hard task; the common substratum of village and cloister ignorance is a ready-made preparation, and at once places the countryman on a level with the monk. Widen the blouse a little and you have a

gown. Sister Perpetua was a strong nun belonging to Marnies near Pantoise, who talked with a country accent, sang psalms to match, sugared the *tisane* according to the bigotry or hypocrisy of the patient, was rough with the sick, and harsh with the dying, almost throwing God in their faces, and storming their last moments with angry prayer. Withal she was bold, honest, and red-faced.

Sister Simplice was pale, and looked like a wax taper by the side of Sister Perpetua, who was a tallow candle in comparison. Vincent de Paule has divinely described the sister of charity in those admirable words in which so much liberty is blended with slavery. "They will have no other convent but the hospital, no other cell but a hired room, no chapel but the parish church, no cloister beyond the streets or the hospital wards, no walls but obedience, no grating but the fear of God, and no veil but modesty." Sister Simplice was the living ideal of this: no one could have told her age, for she had never been young, and seemed as if she would never grow old. She was a gentle, austere, well-nurtured, cold person—we dare not say a woman—who had never told a falsehood; she was so gentle that she appeared fragile, but she was more solid than granite. She touched the wretched with her delicate and pure fingers. There was, so to speak, silence in her language; she only said what was necessary, and possessed an intonation of voice which would at once have edified a confessional and delighted a drawing-room. This delicacy harmonized with the rough gown, for it formed in this rough contact a continual reminder of heaven. Let us dwell on one detail; never to have told a falsehood, never to have said, for any advantage or even indifferently, a thing which was not the truth, the holy truth, was the characteristic feature of Sister Simplice.

Simplice on entering the order had two faults, of which she had gradually corrected herself; she had a taste for dainties, and was fond of receiving letters. Now she never read anything but a Prayer-book in large type and

in Latin : though she did not understand the language, she understood the book. This pious woman felt an affection for Fantine, as she probably noticed the latent virtue in her, and nearly entirely devoted herself to nursing her. M. Madeleine took Sister Simplice on one side and recommended Fantine to her with a singular accent, which the sister remembered afterwards. On leaving the sister he went to Fantine. The patient daily awaited the appearance of M. Madeleine, as if he brought her warmth and light ; she said to the sisters, " I only live when M. le Maire is here." This day she was very feverish, and so soon as she saw M. Madeleine she asked him,—

" Where is Cosette ? "

He replied with a smile, " She will be here soon."

M. Madeleine behaved to Fantine as usual, except that he remained with her an hour instead of half an hour, to her great delight. He pressed everybody not to allow the patient to want for anything, and it was noticed at one moment that his face became very dark, but this was explained when it was learnt that the physician had bent down to his ear and said, " She is rapidly sinking." Then he returned to the Mayoralty, and the office clerk saw him attentively examining a road-map of France which hung in his room, and write a few figures in pencil on a piece of paper.

## CHAPTER II.

### SCAUFFLAIRE'S PERSPICACITY.

FROM the Mayoralty M. Madeleine proceeded to the end of the town to a Fleming called Master Scaufflaer, galli-cized into Scaufflaire, who let out horses and gigs by the day. To reach his yard the nearest way was through an unfrequented street, in which stood the house of the parish priest. The Cure was said to be a worthy and respectable man, who gave good advice. At the moment

when M. Madeleine came in front of his house there was only one person in the street, and he noticed the following circumstances: M. le Maire, after passing the house, stopped for a moment, then turned back and walked up to the Curé's door, which had an iron knocker. He quickly seized the knocker and lifted it; then he stopped again as if in deep thought, and, after a few seconds, instead of knocking, he softly let the knocker fall back in its place and went on with a spring of haste which he had not displayed previously. M. Madeleine found Master Scaufflaire at home and engaged in mending a set of harness.

"Master Scaufflaire," he asked him, "have you a good horse?"

"M. le Maire," the Fleming replied, "all my horses are good. What do you mean by a good horse?"

"I mean a horse that can cover twenty leagues of ground in a day."

"Harnessed in a gig?"

"Yes."

"And how long will it rest after the journey?"

"It must be in a condition to start again the next morning if necessary."

"To go the same distance back?"

"Yes."

"The devil! and it is twenty leagues?"

M. Madeleine took from his pocket the paper on which he had pencilled the figures; they were 5, 6, 8½.

"You see," he said, "total, nineteen and a half, or call them twenty leagues."

"M. le Maire," the Fleming continued, "I can suit you. My little white horse, you may have seen it pass sometimes, is an animal from the Bas Boulonnais, and full of fire. They tried at first to make a saddle-horse of it, but it reared and threw everybody that got on its back. It was supposed to be vicious, and they did not know what to do with it; I bought it and put it in a gig. That was just what it wanted; it is as gentle as a maid and goes like the wind. But you must not try to get on

its back, for it has no notion of being a saddle-horse. Everybody has his ambition, and it appears as if the horse had said to itself, Draw, yes ; carry, no."

" And it will go the distance ? "

" At a trot, and under eight hours, but on certain conditions."

" What are they ? "

" In the first place, you will let it blow for an hour half way ; it will feed, and you must be present while it is doing so, to prevent the ostler stealing the oats, for I have noticed that at inns oats are more frequently drunk by the stable-boys than eaten by the horses."

" I will be there."

" In the next place, is the gig for yourself, sir ? "

" Yes."

" Do you know how to drive ? "

" Yes."

" Well, you must travel alone, and without luggage, in order not to overweight the horse."

" Agreed."

" I shall expect thirty francs a day, and the days of rest paid for as well. Not a farthing less, and you will pay for the horse's keep."

M. Madeleine took three Napoleons from his purse and laid them on the table.

" There are two days in advance."

" In the fourth place, a cabriolet would be too heavy for such a journey and tire the horse. You must oblige me by travelling in a little tilbury I have."

" I consent."

" It is light, but it is open."

" I do not care."

" Have you thought, sir, that it is winter now ? "

M. Madeleine made no answer, and the Fleming continued,—

" That it is very cold ? "

Monsieur Madeleine was still silent.

" That it may rain ? "

The Mayor raised his head and said,—



"The tilbury and the horse will be before my door at half-past four to-morrow morning."

"Very good, sir," Scaufflaire answered, then scratching with his thumb-nail a stain in the wood of his table, he continued, with that careless air with which the Flemings so cleverly conceal their craft,—

"Good gracious, I have not thought of asking where you are going? Be kind enough to tell me, sir."

He had thought of nothing else since the beginning of the conversation, but somehow he had not dared to ask the question.

"Has your horse good legs?" said M. Madeleine.

"Yes, M. le Maire; you will hold it up a little in going downhill. Are there many hills between here and the place you are going to?"

"Do not forget to be at my door at half-past four exactly," M. Madeleine answered, and went away.

The Fleming stood "like a fool," as he said himself, a little while after. M. le Maire had been gone some two or three minutes when the door opened again; it was M. le Maire. He still wore the same impassive and pre-occupied air.

"M. Scaufflaire," he said, "at how much do you value the tilbury and horse you are going to let me, one with the other?"

"Do you wish to buy them of me, sir?"

"No, but I should like to guarantee them against any accident, and when I come back you can return me the amount. What is the estimated value?"

"Five hundred francs, M. le Maire."

"Here they are."

M. Madeleine laid a banknote on the table, then went out, and this time did not come back. Master Scaufflaire regretted frightfully that he had not said a thousand francs, though tilbury and horse, at a fair valuation, were worth just three hundred. The Fleming called his wife and told her what had occurred. "Where the deuce can the Mayor be going?" They held a council. "He is going to Paris," said the wife. "I don't believe it," said

the husband. M. Madeleine had left on the table the paper on which he had written the figures ; the Fleming took it up and examined it. " Five, six, eight and a half ; why, that must mean post stations." He turned to his wife : " I have found it out." " How ? " " It is five leagues from here to Hesdin, six from there to St. Pol, and eight and a half from St. Pol to Arras. He is going to Arras."

In the meanwhile the Mayor had returned home, and had taken the longest road, as if the gate of the priest's house were a temptation to him which he wished to avoid. He went up to his bedroom and locked himself in, which was not unusual, for he was fond of going to bed at an early hour. Still the factory portress, who was at the same time M. Madeleine's only servant, remarked that his candle was extinguished at a quarter-past eight, and mentioned the fact to the cashier when he came in, adding,—

" Can master be ill ? I thought he looked very strange to-day." The cashier occupied a room exactly under M. Madeleine's ; he paid no attention to the remarks of the portress, but went to bed and fell asleep. About midnight he woke with a start, for he heard in his sleep a noise above his head. He listened ; it was a footfall coming and going, as if some one were walking about the room above him. He listened more attentively, and recognized M. Madeleine's step ; and this seemed to him strange, for usually no sound could be heard from the Mayor's room till he rose. A moment later the cashier heard something like a wardrobe open and shut ; a piece of furniture was moved, there was a silence, and the walking began again. The cashier sat up in bed, broad awake, looked out, and through his window noticed on a wall opposite the red reflection of a lighted window ; from the direction of the rays it could only be the window of M. Madeleine's bedroom. The reflection flickered as if it came from a fire rather than a candle, while the shadow of the framework could not be traced, which proved that the window was wide open, and this was a curious fact, regard being had

to the coldness. The cashier fell asleep and woke again some two hours after ; the same slow and regular footfall was still audible above his head. The reflection was still cast on the wall, but was now pale and quiet, as if it came from a lamp or a candle. The window was still open. This is what was occurring in M. Madeleine's bedroom.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A TEMPEST IN A BRAIN.

THE reader has, of course, guessed that M. Madeleine was Jean Valjean. We have already looked into the depths of this conscience, and the moment has arrived to look into them again. We do not do this without emotion or tremor, for there is nothing more terrifying than this species of contemplation. The mental eye can nowhere find greater brilliancy or greater darkness than within man ; it cannot dwell on anything which is more formidable, complicated, mysterious, or infinite. There is a spectacle grander than the ocean, and that is the sky ; there is a spectacle grander than the sky, and it is the interior of the soul. To write the poem of the human conscience, were the subject only one man, and he the lowest of men, would be reducing all epic poems into one supreme and final epos.

We have but little to add to what the reader already knows as having happened to Jean Valjean since his adventure with Little Gervais. From this moment, as we have seen, he became another man, and he made himself what the Bishop wished to make him. It was more than a transformation, it was a transfiguration. He succeeded in disappearing, sold the Bishop's plate, only keeping the candlesticks as a souvenir, passed through France, reached M——, had the idea we have described, accomplished what we have narrated, managed to make himself unseizable and inaccessible, and henceforth settled at

M——, happy at feeling his conscience saddened by the past, and the first half of his existence contradicted by the last half ; he lived peacefully, reassured and trusting, and having but two thoughts—to hide his name and sanctify his life ; escape from men and return to God. These two thoughts were so closely blended in his mind, that they only formed one ; they were both equally absorbing and imperious, and governed his slightest actions. Usually they agreed to regulate the conduct of his life ; they turned him to the shadow ; they rendered him beneficent and simple, and they counselled him the same things. At times, however, there was a conflict between them, and in such cases the man whom the whole town of M—— called Monsieur Madeleine did not hesitate to sacrifice the first to the second—his security to his virtue. Hence, despite all his caution and prudence, he had kept the Bishop's candlesticks, worn mourning for him, questioned all the little Savoyards who passed through the town, inquired after the family at Faverolles, and saved the life of old Fauchelevent, in spite of the alarming insinuations of Javert. It seemed, as we have already remarked, that he thought, after the example of all those who have been wise, holy, and just, that his first duty was not toward himself.

Still, we are bound to say nothing like the present had before occurred ; never had the two ideas which governed the unhappy man whose sufferings we are describing, entered upon so serious a struggle. He comprehended confusedly but deeply from the first words which Javert uttered on entering his study. At the moment when the name which he had buried so deeply was so strangely pronounced he was struck with stupor, and, as it were, intoxicated by the sinister peculiarity of his destiny. And through this stupor he felt that quivering which precedes great storms ; he bowed like an oak at the approach of a storm, like a soldier before a coming assault. He felt the shadows full of thunder and lightning collecting over his head : while listening to Javert he had a thought of running off, denouncing himself, tak-

ing Champmathieu out of prison, and taking his place. This was painful, like an incision in the flesh, but it passed away, and he said to himself, We will see ! He repressed this first generous movement, and recoiled before his heroism.

It would doubtless be grand if, after the Bishop's holy remarks, after so many years of repentance and self-denial, in the midst of a penitence so admirably commenced, this man, even in the presence of such a terrible conjuncture, had not failed for a moment, but continued to march at the same pace toward this open abyss, at the bottom of which heaven was : this would be grand, but it did not take place. We are bound to describe all the things that took place in this mind, and cannot say that this was one of them. What carried him away first was the instinct of self-preservation. He hastily collected his ideas, stifled his emotion, adjourned any resolution with the firmness of terror, deadened himself against what he had to do, and resumed his calmness as a gladiator puts up his buckler. For the remainder of the day he was in the same state—a hurricane within, a deep tranquillity outside—and he only took what may be called “conservative measures.” All was still confused and jumbled in his brain ; the trouble in it was so great that he did not see distinctly the outline of any idea, and he could have said nothing about himself, save that he had received a heavy blow. He went as usual to Fantine's bed of pain, and prolonged his visit, with a kindly instinct, saying to himself that he must act thus, and recommend her to the sisters in the event of his being obliged to go away. He felt vaguely that he must perhaps go to Arras ; and though not the least in the world decided about the journey, he said to himself that, safe from suspicion as he was, there would be no harm in being witness of what might take place, and he hired Scaufflaire's tilbury, in order to be ready for any event.

He dined with considerable appetite, and, on returning to his bedroom, reflected. He examined his situation, and found it extraordinary—so extraordinary that, in the

midst of his reverie, through some almost inexplicable impulse of anxiety, he rose from his chair and bolted his door. He was afraid lest something might enter, and he barricaded himself against the possible. A moment after, he blew out his light, for it annoyed him, and he fancied that he might be overseen. By whom? Alas, what he wanted to keep out had entered; what he wished to blind was looking at him. It was his conscience, that is to say, GOD. Still, at the first moment, he deceived himself; he had a feeling of security and solitude. When he put in the bolt, he thought himself impregnable; when the candle was out, he felt himself invisible. He then regained his self-possession; and he put his elbows on the table, leant his head on his hand, and began dreaming in the darkness.

"Where am I? Am I not dreaming? What was I told? Is it really true that I saw that Javert, and that he spoke to me so? Who can this Champmathieu be? It seems he resembles me. Is it possible? when I think that I was so tranquil yesterday, and so far from suspecting anything! What was I doing yesterday at this hour? What will be the result of this event? What am I to do?"

Such was the trouble he was in that his brain had not the strength to retain ideas. They passed like waves, and he clutched his forehead with both hands to stop them. From this tumult which overthrew his wits and reason, and from which he sought to draw an evidence and a resolution, nothing issued but agony. His head was burning; and he went to the window and threw it wide open. There were no stars in the heavens, and he went back to the table and sat down by it. The first hour passed away thus, but gradually vague features began to shape themselves, and become fixed in his thoughts, and he could observe with the precision of reality some details of the situation, if not its entirety. He began by noticing that, however critical and extraordinary his situation might be, he was utterly the master of it, and his stupor was only augmented.

His reverie continued to grow clearer, and each moment he comprehended his position better. It seemed to him that he had just awakened from a dream, and that he was descending an incline in the middle of the night, shuddering and recoiling in vain from the brink of an abyss. He distinctly saw in the shadows an unknown man, a stranger, whom destiny took for him, and thrust into the gulf in his place. In order that the gulf should close, either he or another must fall in. He had no necessity to do anything, the clearness became complete, and he confessed to himself—that his place was vacant at the galleys; that, whatever he might do, it constantly expected him, that the robbery of Little Gervais led him back to it, that this vacant place would wait for him and attract him, until he filled it, and that this was inevitable and fatal. And then he said to himself—that at this moment he had a substitute—that it seemed a man of the name of Champmathieu had this ill-luck; and that in future, himself at the bagne in the person of this Champmathieu, and present in society under the name of M. Madeleine, would have nothing more to fear provided that he did not prevent justice from laying over the head of this Champmathieu the stone of infamy which, like the tombstone, falls once and is never raised again.

All this was so violent and so strange, that he suddenly felt within him that species of indescribable movement which no man experiences more than twice or thrice in his life, a sort of convulsion of the conscience, which disturbs everything doubtful in the heart, which is composed of irony, joy, and despair, and what might be called an internal burst of laughter. He suddenly relit his candle.

"Well, what am I afraid of?" he said to himself; "what reason have I to have such thoughts? I am saved, and all is settled. There was only one open door through which my past could burst in upon my life: and that door is now walled up for ever. That Javert, who has so long annoyed me, the formidable instinct which seemed to have scented me, and by Heavens! had scented me, the frightful dog ever making a point at me,

is routed, engaged elsewhere, and absolutely thrown out ! He is henceforth satisfied, he will leave me at peace, for he has got his Jean Valjean ! It is possible that he may wish to leave the town too. And all this has taken place without my interference, and so what is there so unlucky in it all ? On my word, any people who saw me would believe that a catastrophe had befallen me. After all, if some people are rendered unhappy, it is no fault of mine. Providence has done it all, and apparently decrees it. Have I the right to derange what He arranges ? ”

He spoke this in the depths of his conscience, while leaning over what might be called his own abyss. He got up from his chair and walked about the room. “Come,” he said, “I will think no more of it ; I have made up my mind ;” but he felt no joy. It is no more possible to prevent thought from reverting to an idea than the sea from returning to the shore. With the sailor this is called the tide, with the culprit it is called remorse ; GOD heaves the soul like the ocean. After a few moments, whatever he might do, he resumed the gloomy dialogue in which it was he who spoke and he who listened, saying what he wished to be silent about, listening to what he did not desire to hear, and yielding to that mysterious power which said to him “think,” as it did, two thousand years ago, to another condemned man, “go on.”

He continued to cross-question himself. He asked himself what he had meant by the words, “my object is attained ?” He allowed that his life had an object, but what was its nature ?—Conceal his name ! deceive the police. Was it for so paltry a thing that he had done all that he had effected ? had he not another object which was the great and true one, to save not his person, but his soul—to become once again honest and good ? To be a just man ! was it not that he had solely craved after, and what the Bishop had ordered him ? Close the door on his past ? but, great Heaven, he opened it again by committing an infamous action. He was becoming a robber once more, and the most odious of robbers ! he



was robbing another man of his existence, his livelihood, his peace, and his place in the sunshine. He was becoming an assassin, he was killing, morally killing, a wretched man; he was inflicting on him the frightful living death, the open-air death, which is called the galleys. On the other hand, if he gave himself up, freed this man who was suffering from so grievous an error, resumed his name, became through duty the convict Jean Valjean, that would be really completing his resurrection, and eternally closing the inferno from which he was emerging! Falling back into it apparently would be leaving it in reality! He must do this: he would have done nothing unless he did this; all his life would be useless; all his reputation thrown away. He felt that the Bishop was here, that he was the more present because he was dead, that the Bishop was steadfastly looking at him, and that henceforth Madeleine the Mayor would be an abomination to him, and Jean Valjean, the convict, admirable and pure in his sight. Men saw his mask, but the Bishop saw his face; men saw his life, but the Bishop saw his conscience. He must consequently go to Arras, deliver the false Jean Valjean, and denounce the true one. Alas! this was the greatest of sacrifices, the most poignant of victories, the last step to take; but he must take it. Frightful destiny his! he could not obtain sanctity in the sight of Heaven unless he returned to infamy in the sight of man.

"Well," he said, "I will make up my mind to this. I will do my duty and save this man."

He uttered those words aloud without noticing he had raised his voice. He fetched his books, verified and put them in order. He threw into the fire a number of claims he had upon embarrassed tradesmen, and wrote a letter, which he addressed "To M. Lafitte, banker, Rue d'Artois, Paris." He then took from his desk a pocket-book which contained a few bank-notes and the passport he had employed just previously to go to the elections. Any one who had seen him while he was accomplishing these various acts, with which such grave

méditation was mingled, would not have suspected what was taking place in him. At moments his lips moved, at others he raised his head and looked at a part of the wall, as if there were something there which he desired to clear up or question.

When the letter to M. Lafitte was finished, he put it into his portfolio, and began his walk once more. His reverie had not deviated; he continued to see his duty clearly written in luminous letters which flashed before his eyes, and moved about with his glance, Name yourself, denounce yourself! He felt that he was approaching the second decisive moment of his life; that the Bishop marked the first phase of his new life, and that this Champmathieu marked the second; after the great crisis came the great trial.

The fever, appeased for a moment, gradually returned, however. A thousand thoughts crossed his mind, but they continued to strengthen him in his resolution. At one moment he said to himself that he perhaps regarded the matter too seriously; that, after all, this Champmathieu was not interesting, and in any case was a thief. He answered himself—If this man has really stolen apples, he will have a month's imprisonment, but that is a long way from the galleys. And then, again, is it proved that he has committed a robbery? The name of Jean Valjean is crushing him, and seems to dispense with proofs. Do not public prosecutors habitually act in this way? A man is believed to be a thief because he is known to be a convict. At another moment the idea occurred to him that, when he had denounced himself, the heroism of his deed might perhaps be taken into consideration, as well as his life of honesty during the last seven years, and the good he had done the town, and that he would be pardoned. But this supposition soon vanished, and he smiled bitterly at the thought that the robbery of the 40 sous from Gervais rendered him a relapsed convict, that this affair would certainly be brought forward, and, by the precise terms of the law, sentence him to the galleys for life.

He turned away from all illusions, detached himself more and more from earth, and sought consolation and strength elsewhere. He said to himself that he must do his duty: that, perhaps, he would not be more wretched after doing it than he would have been had he eluded it: that, if he let matters take their course and remained at M——, his good name, good deeds, charity, wealth, popularity, and virtue would be tainted by a crime; and what flavour would all these sacred things have, when attached to this hideous thought; while, if he accomplished his sacrifice, he would mingle a heavenly idea with the galleys, the chain, the green cap, the unrelaxing toil, and the pitiless shame. At last he said to himself that it was a necessity, that his destiny was thus shaped, that he had no power to derange the arrangements of Heaven, and that in any case he must choose either external virtue and internal abomination, or holiness within and infamy outside him. His courage did not fail him in revolving so many mournful ideas, but his brain grew weary. He began thinking involuntarily of other and indifferent matters. His arteries beat violently in his temples, and he was still walking up and down; midnight struck, first from the parish church, and then from the Town Hall: he counted the twelve strokes of the two clocks, and compared the sound of the two bells. They reminded him that a few days before he had seen an old bell at a marine store, on which was engraved the name Antoine Albier, Romainville.

As he felt cold, he lit a fire, but did not dream of closing the window. Then he fell back into his stupor, obliged to make a mighty effort to remember what he had been thinking of before midnight struck. At last he succeeded.

"Ah, yes," he said to himself, "I had formed the resolution to denounce myself."

And then he suddenly began thinking of Fantine.

"Stay," he said, "and that poor woman!"

Here a fresh crisis broke out: Fantine, suddenly

appearing in the midst of his reverie, was like a ray of unexpected light. He fancied that all changed around him, and exclaimed,—

“Wait a minute! Hitherto, I have thought of myself and consulted my own convenience. Whether it suits me to be silent or denounce myself—hide my person or save my soul—be a contemptible and respected Magistrate, or an infamous and venerable convict—it is always self, nought but self. Good heavens, all this is egotism under different shapes, ’tis true, but still egotism. Suppose I were to think a little about others! It is the first duty of a Christian to think of his neighbour. Well, let me examine: when I am effaced and forgotten, what will become of all this? If I denounce myself, that Champmathieu will be set at liberty. I shall be sent back to the galleys, and what then? What will occur here? Here are a town, factories, a trade, workpeople, men, women, old grandfathers, children, and poor people: I have created all this. I keep it all alive: wherever there is a chimney smoking I placed the brand in the fire and the meat in the saucepan: I have produced easy circumstances, circulation, and credit. Before I came there was nothing of all this; I revived, animated, fertilized, stimulated, and enriched the whole district. When I am gone the soul will be gone; if I withdraw, all will die; and then this woman, who has suffered so greatly, who has so much merit in her fall, and whose misfortune I unwittingly caused—and the child which I intended to go and fetch, and restore to the mother—do not I also owe something to this woman, in reparation of the wrong which I have done her? If I disappear, what will happen? the mother dies, and the child will become what it can. This will happen if I denounce myself. If I do not denounce myself? Come, let me see.”

After asking himself this question, he hesitated, and trembled slightly, but this emotion lasted but a short time, and he answered himself calmly:—

“Well, this man will go to the galleys, it is true, but

hang it all, he has stolen. Although I may say to myself that he has not stolen, he has done so ! I remain here and continue my operations : in ten years I shall have gained ten millions. I spread them over the country. I keep nothing for myself ; but what do I care ? I am not doing this for myself. The prosperity of all is increased ; trades are revived, factories and forges are multiplied, and thousands of families are happy ; the district is populated ; villages spring up where there are only farms, and farms where there is nothing ; wretchedness disappears, and with it debauchery, prostitution, robbery, murder, all the vices, all the crimes—and this poor mother brings up her child. Why, I 'was mad, absurd, when I talked about denouncing myself, and I must guard against precipitation. What ! because it pleases me to play the grand and the generous—it is pure melodrama after all—because I only thought of myself, and in order to save from a perhaps exaggerated though substantially just punishment a stranger, a thief, and an apparent scoundrel—a whole department must perish ! a poor woman die in the hospital, and a poor child starve in the streets, like dogs ! Why, it is abominable ! without the mother seeing her child again or the child knowing her mother ! and all this on behalf of an old scamp of an apple stealer, who has assuredly deserved the galleys for something else, if not for that. These are fine scruples that save a culprit and sacrifice the innocent, that save an old vagabond who has not many years to live, and will not be more unhappy at the galleys than in his hovel, and destroy an entire population—mothers, wives, and children. That poor little Cosette, who has only me in the world, and is doubtless at this moment shivering with cold in the den of those Thénardiens. There is another pair of wretches. And I would fail in my duties to all these poor creatures and commit such a folly as to denounce myself ! Let us put things at the worst : suppose that I am committing a bad action in this, and that my conscience reproaches me with it some day—there will be devotion and virtue

in accepting, for the good of my neighbour, these reproaches, which only weigh on me, and this bad action, which only compromises my own soul."

He got up and began walking up and down again: this time he seemed to be satisfied with himself. Diamonds are only found in the darkness of the earth; truths are only found in the depths of the thought. It seemed to him that after descending into these depths, after groping for some time in the densest of this darkness, he had found one of these diamonds, one of these truths, which he held in his hand and which dazzled his eyes when he looked at it.

"Yes," he thought, "I am on the right track, and hold the solution of the problem. A man must in the end hold on to something, and my mind is made up. I will let matters take their course, so no more vacillation or backsliding. It is for the interest of all, not of myself. I am Madeleine, and remain Madeleine, and woe to the man who is Jean Valjean. I am no longer he. I do not know that man, and if any one happen to be Jean Valjean at this moment, he must look out for himself, for it does not concern me. It is a fatal name that floats in the night, and if it stop and settle on a head, all the worse for that head."

He looked into the small looking-glass over the mantel-piece, and said to himself,—

"How greatly has forming a resolution relieved me! I am quite a different man at present."

He walked a little way and then stopped short. "Come," he said, "I must not hesitate before any of the consequences of the resolution I have formed. There are threads which still attach me to Jean Valjean which must be broken. There are in this very room objects which would accuse me—dumb things which would serve as witnesses, and they must all disappear."

He took his purse from his pocket, and drew a small key out of it. He put this key in a lock, the hole of which could scarcely be seen, for it was hidden in the darkest part of the design on the paper that covered

the walls. A sort of false cupboard made between the corner of the wall and the mantelpiece was visible. In this hiding-place there were only a few rags—a blue blouse, worn trousers, an old knapsack, and a large thorn-stick, shod with iron at both ends. Any one who saw Jean Valjean pass through D—— in October, 1815, would easily have recognized all these wretched articles. He had preserved them, as he had done the candlesticks, that they might constantly remind him of his starting-point; still he hid what came from the galleys, and displayed the candlesticks which came from the Bishop. He took a furtive glance at the door, as if afraid that it might open in spite of the bolt; and then with a rapid movement he made but one armful of the things he had so religiously and perilously kept for so many years, and threw them all—rags, stick, and knapsack—into the fire. He closed the cupboard, and, redoubling his precautions, which were now useless since it was empty, dragged a heavy piece of furniture in front of it. In a few seconds, the room and opposite wall were lit up with a large red and flickering glow; all was burning, and the thorn-stick crackled and threw out sparks into the middle of the room. From the knapsack, as it burned with all the rags it contained, fell something that glistened in the ashes. On stooping it could be easily recognized as a coin; it was doubtless the little Savoyard's two-franc piece. He did not look at the fire, and continued his walk backwards and forwards. All at once his eye fell on the two candlesticks which the firelight caused to shine vaguely on the mantelpiece.

"Stay," he thought, "all Jean Valjean is in them, and they must be destroyed too."

He seized the candlesticks—there was a fire large enough to destroy their shape, and convert them into unrecognizable ingots. He leant over the hearth and warmed his hands for a moment; it was a great comfort to him.

He stirred up the ashes with one of the candlesticks,

and in a moment they were both in the fire. All at once he fancied he heard a voice cry within him, "Jean Valjean! Jean Valjean!" His hair stood erect, and he became like a man who is listening to a terrible thing.

"Yes, that is right; finish!" the voice said; "complete what you are about; destroy those candlesticks, annihilate that reminiscence! forget the Bishop! forget everything! ruin that Champmathieu; that is right. Applaud yourself; come, all is settled and resolved on. This old man, who does not know what they want with him, who is perhaps innocent, whose whole misfortune your name causes, on whom your name weighs like a crime, is going to be taken for you, sentenced, and will end his days in abjectness and horror. That is excellent! Be an honest man yourself; remain Mayor, honourable and honoured, enrich the town, assist the indigent, bring up orphans, live happy, virtuous, and applauded; and during this time, while you are here in joy and light, there will be somebody who wears your red jacket, bears your name in ignominy, and drags along your chain at the galleys. Yes, that is excellently arranged. Oh! you scoundrel!"

The perspiration beaded on his forehead, and he fixed his haggard eye upon the candlesticks. The voice within him, however, had not ended yet.

"Jean Valjean! there will be around you many voices making a great noise, speaking very loud and blessing you, and one which no one will hear, and which will curse you in the darkness. Well, listen, infamous man! all these blessings will fall back on the ground before reaching Heaven, and the curse alone will ascend to God!"

This voice, at first very faint, and which spoke from the obscurest nook of his conscience, had gradually become sonorous and formidable, and he now heard it in his ear. He fancied that it was not his own voice, and he seemed to hear the last words so distinctly that he looked round the room with a species of terror.

"Is there any one here?" he asked, in a loud voice and wildly.



Then he continued with a laugh, which seemed almost idiotic,—

“What a fool I am ! there can be nobody.”

There was somebody ; but He was not of those whom the human eye can see. He placed the candlesticks on the mantelpiece, and then resumed that melancholy, mournful walk, which aroused the sleeper underneath him. This walking relieved him, and at the same time intoxicated him. It appears sometimes as if on supreme occasions people move about to ask advice of everything they pass. At the end of a few moments he no longer knew what result to arrive at. He now recoiled with equal horror from the two resolutions he had formed in turn ; the two ideas that counselled him seemed each as desperate as the other. What a fatality that this Champ-mathieu should be taken for him ! He was hurled down precisely by the means which Providence at first seemed to have employed to strengthen his position.

There was a moment during which he regarded his future :—denounce himself ! great Heavens ! give himself up ! He thought with immense despair of all that he must give up, of all that he must resume. He would be forced to bid adieu to this good, pure, radiant life—to the respect of all classes—to honour, to liberty ! He would no longer walk about the fields, he would no longer hear the birds sing in May, or give alms to the little children ! He would no longer feel the sweetness of glances of gratitude and love fixed upon him ! He would leave this little house, which he had built, and his little bedroom. All appeared charming to him at this moment. He would no longer read those books or write at the little deal table ; his old servant would no longer bring up his coffee in the morning. Great God ! instead of all this, there would be the gang, the red jacket, the chain on his foot, fatigue, the dungeon, the camp-bed, and all the horrors he knew ! At his age, after all he had borne ! It would be different were he still young. But to be old, coarsely addressed by anybody, searched by the gaoler, and receive blows from

the keeper's stick ! to thrust his naked feet into iron-shod shoes ! to offer his leg morning and night to the man who examines the fetters ! to endure the curiosity of strangers who would be told, " That is the famous Jean Valjean, who was Mayor of M——." At night, when pouring with perspiration, and crushed by fatigue, with a green cap on his head, to go up two by two, under the sergeant's whip, the side ladder of the hulks ! Oh what misery ! Destiny, then, can be as wicked as an intelligent being and prove as monstrous as the human heart ?

And whatever he might do, he ever fell back into this crushing dilemma, which was the basis of his reverie. Remain in paradise, and become a demon there ; or re-enter hell, and become an angel ? What should he do, great God ! what should he do ? The trouble, from which he had escaped with such difficulty, was again let loose on him, and his thoughts became composed once more. They assumed something stupefied and mechanical, which is peculiar to despair. The name of Romainville incessantly returned to his mind, with two lines of a song which he had formerly heard. He remembered that Romainville is a little wood, near Paris, where lovers go to pick lilac in April. He tottered both externally and internally ; he walked like a little child allowed to go alone. At certain moments he struggled against his lassitude, and tried to recapture his intelligence ; he tried to set himself, for the last time, the problem over which he had fallen in a state of exhaustion—must he denounce himself, or must he be silent ? He could not succeed in seeing anything distinct, the vague outlines of all the reasonings sketched in by his reverie were dissipated in turn like smoke. Still, he felt that, however he resolved, and without any possibility of escape, something belonging to him was about to die ; that he entered a sepulchre, whether on his right hand or his left, and that either his happiness or his virtue would be borne to the grave.

Alas ! all his irresolution had seized him again, and he

## LES MISÉRABLES.

was no further advanced than at the beginning. Thus the wretched soul writhed in agony !

### CHAPTER IV.

#### SUFFERINGS IN SLEEP.

THREE a.m. had struck, and he had been walking about in this way for five hours without a break, when he fell into his chair. He fell asleep, and had a dream. This dream, like most dreams, was only connected with his situation by something poignant and mournful, but it made an impression on him. This nightmare struck him so much that he wrote it down on a later date, and we think we are bound to transcribe it verbatim, for whatever the history of this man may be, it would be incomplete if we omitted it. Here it is then ; on the envelope we notice the line—*The dream I had on that night.*

“ I was upon a plain, a large, mournful plain, on which no grass grew. It did not seem to me to be day, but it was not night. I was walking with my brother, the brother of my boyish years, of whom I am bound to say I never think, and whom I scarce remember. We were talking, and met travellers. We spoke about a woman, formerly a neighbour of ours, who had always worked with her window open, since she had occupied a front room. While talking, we felt cold on account of this open window. There were no trees on the plain. We saw a man pass close by us ; he was a perfectly naked man, of the colour of ashes, mounted on a horse of an earthen colour. The man had no hair, and I could see his skull, and the veins on his skull. He held in hand a wand, which was supple as a vine-twigg and heavy as lead. This horseman passed and said nothing to us.

“ My brother said to me, ‘ Let us turn into the hollow way.’

"It was a hollow way in which not a bramble or even a patch of moss could be seen; all was earth-coloured, even the sky. After going a few yards, I received no answer when I spoke, and I noticed that my brother was no longer with me. I entered the village that I saw, and I fancied that it must be Romainville. The first street I entered was deserted; I entered a second street, and behind the angle formed by the two streets a man was standing against the wall. I asked this man, 'What is this place? where am I?' but he gave me no answer. I saw the door of a house open, and walked in.

"The first room was deserted, and I entered a second. Behind the door of this room there was a man leaning against the wall. I asked him, 'To whom does this house belong? where am I?' but the man gave me no answer. I went out into the garden of the house, and it was deserted. Behind the first tree I found a man standing; I said to the man, 'Whose is this garden? where am I?' but he made me no answer.

"I wandered about this village, and fancied that it was a town. All the streets were deserted, all the doors open. Not a living soul passed along the street, moved in the rooms, or walked in the gardens. But there was behind every corner, every door, and every tree, a man standing silently. I never saw more than one at a time, and these men looked at me as I passed.

"I left the village and began walking about the fields. At the end of some time I turned back, and saw a great crowd coming after me. I recognized all the men whom I had seen in the town, and they had strange heads. They did not appear to be in a hurry, and yet they walked faster than I, and made no noise in walking. In an instant this crowd joined me, and surrounded me. The faces of these men were earth-coloured. Then the man I had seen first and questioned when I entered the town, said to me, 'Where are you going? do you not know that you have been dead for a long time?' I opened my mouth to answer, and I perceived that there was no one near me."

## LES MISERABLES.

He woke up, chilled to the marrow, for a wind, cold as the morning breeze, was shaking the open window. The fire had died away, the candle was nearly burned out, and it was still black night. He rose and went to the window; there were still no stars in the sky. From his window he could see the yard, and his street, and a dry, sharp sound on the ground below him induced him to look out. He saw two red stars whose rays lengthened and shortened curiously in the gloom. As his mind was half submerged in the mist of dreams, he thought, "There are no stars in the sky; they are on the earth now." A second sound like the first completely woke him, and he perceived that those two stars were carriage lamps, and by the light which they projected he could distinguish the shape of the vehicle—it was a tilbury, in which a small white horse was harnessed. The sound he had heard was the pawing of the horse's hoof on the ground.

"What's the meaning of this conveyance?" he said to himself; "who can have come at so early an hour?"

At this moment there was a gentle tap at his bedroom door; he shuddered from head to foot, and shouted in a terrible voice, "Who's there?"

Some one replied, "I, sir," and he recognized his old servant's voice.

"Well," he continued, "what is it?"

"It is getting on for four o'clock, sir."

"What has that to do with me?"

"The tilbury has come, sir."

"What tilbury?"

"Did you not order one?"

"No," he said.

"The ostler says that he has come to fetch M. le Maire."

"What ostler?"

"M. Scaufflaire's."

This name made him start as if a flash of lightning had passed before his eyes.

"Ah, yes," he repeated, "M. Scaufflaire."

Could the old woman have seen him at this moment, she would have been horrified. There was a lengthened

silence, during which he stupidly examined the candle flame, and rolled up some of the wax in his fingers. The old woman, who was waiting, at length mustered up courage to raise her voice again.

“ M. le Maire, what answer am I to give ? ”

“ Say it is quite right, and that I shall be down directly.”

## CHAPTER V.

### OBSTACLES.

THE letter-bags between Arras and M—— were still carried in small mail-carts, dating from the Empire. They were two-wheeled vehicles, lined with tawny leather, hung on springs, and having only two seats, one for the driver, and another for a passenger. The wheels were armed with those long offensive axle-trees which kept other carriages at a distance, and may still be seen on German roads. The compartment for the bags was an immense oblong box at the back ; it was painted black, and the front part was yellow. These vehicles, like which we have nothing at the present day, had something ugly and hump-backed about them, and when you saw them pass at a distance or creeping up a hill on the horizon, they resembled those insects called, we think, termites, and which with a small body drag a heavy lumber after them. They went very fast, however, and the mail which left Arras at one in the morning, after the Paris mail had arrived, reached M—— a little before five a.m.

On this morning, the mail-cart, just as it entered M——, and while turning a corner, ran into a tilbury, drawn by a white horse, coming in the opposite direction, and in which there was only one sitter, a man wrapped in a cloak. The wheel of the tilbury received a rather heavy blow, and though the driver of the mail-cart shouted to the man to stop, he did not listen, but went on at a smart trot.

## LES MISÉRABLES.

"That man is in a deuce of a hurry," said the courier.

The man in this hurry was he whom we have just seen, struggling in convulsions, assuredly deserving of pity. Where was he going? He could not have told. Why was he hurrying? He did not know. He was going onwards unthinkingly. Where to? Doubtless to Arras; but he might also be going elsewhere. He buried himself in the darkness as in a gulf. Something urged him on; something attracted him. What was going on in him no one could tell, but all will understand it—for what man has not entered, at least once in his life, this obscure cavern of the unknown? However, he had settled, decided, and done nothing; not one of the acts of his conscience had been definitive, and he was still as unsettled as at the beginning.

Why was he going to Arras? He repeated what he had already said on hiring the gig of Scaufflaire—that, whatever the result might be, there would be no harm in seeing with his own eyes, and judging matters for himself—that this was prudent; and he was bound to know what was going on—that he could not decide anything till he had observed and examined—that, at a distance, a man made mountains of molehills—that after all, when he had seen this Champmathieu, his conscience would probably be quietly relieved, and he could let the scoundrel go to the galleys in his place: that Javert would be there and the three convicts who had known him—but nonsense! they would not recognize him, for all conjectures and suppositions were fixed on this Champmathieu, and there is nothing so obstinate as conjectures and suppositions—and that hence he incurred no danger. It was doubtless a black moment, but he would emerge from it. After all, he held his destiny, however adverse it might try to be, in his own hands, and was master of it. He clung wildly to the latter thought.

Although, to tell the whole truth, he would have preferred not to go to Arras, yet he went. While reflecting he lashed the horse, which was going at that regular and certain trot which covers two leagues and a half in an

hour ; and as the gig advanced, he felt something within him recoil. At daybreak he was in the open country, and the town of M—— was far behind him. He watched the horizon grow white ; he looked, without seeing them, at all the cold figures of a winter dawn. Morning has its spectres like night. He did not see them, but unconsciously, and through a sort of almost physical penetration, these black outlines of trees and hills added something gloomy and sinister to the violent state of his soul. Each time that he passed one of those isolated houses which skirt highroads, he said to himself, " And yet there are people asleep in them." The trot of the horse, the bells on the harness, the wheels on the stones, produced a gentle and monotonous sound, which is delightful when you are merry, and mournful when you are sad.

It was broad daylight when he reached Hesdin, and he stopped at the inn to let the horse breathe and give it a feed. This horse, as Scaufflaire had said, belonged to that small Boulonnais breed, which has too large a head, too much stomach, and too small a neck, but which also has a wide chest, fine, slender legs, and a firm trot ; it is an ugly but strong and healthy breed. The capital little beast had done five leagues in two hours, and had not turned a hair.

He did not get out of the tilbury ; the ostler who brought the oats suddenly stooped down and examined the left wheel.

" Are you going far in this state ? " the man said.

He answered almost without emerging from his reverie, " Why do you ask ? "

" Have you come any distance ? " the ostler continued " Five leagues."

" Ah ! "

" Why do you say ah ? "

The ostler bent down again, remained silent for a moment, with his eye fixed on the wheel, and then said as he drew himself up,—

" Because this wheel, which may have gone five leagues cannot possibly go another mile."



He jumped out of the tilbury.

"What are you saying, my friend?"

"I say that it is a miracle you and your horse did not roll into a ditch by the roadside. Just look."

The wheel was, in fact, seriously damaged. The blow dealt it by the mail-cart had broken two spokes, and almost carried away the axle-tree.

"My good fellow," he said to the ostler, "is there a wheelwright here?"

"Of course, sir."

"Be good enough to go and fetch him."

"He lives close by.—Hilloh, Master Bourgaillard."

Master Bourgaillard was standing in his doorway; he examined the wheel, and made a face like a surgeon regarding a broken leg.

"Can you mend this wheel?"

"Yes, sir."

"When can I start again?"

"To-morrow: there is a good day's work. Are you in a hurry, sir?"

"In a great hurry: I must set out again in an hour at the latest."

"It is impossible, sir."

"I will pay anything you ask."

"Impossible."

"Well, in two hours?"

"It is impossible for to-day; you will not be able to go on till to-morrow."

"My business cannot wait till to-morrow. Suppose, instead of mending this wheel, you were to put another on?"

"How so?"

"You are a wheelwright, and have probably a wheel you can sell me, and then I could set out again directly."

"I have no ready-made wheel to suit your gig, for wheels are sold in pairs, and it is not easy to match one."

"In that case, sell me a pair of wheels."

"All wheels, sir, do not fit all axle-trees."

"At any rate try."

"It is useless, sir; I have only cart-wheels for sale, for ours is a small place."

"Have you a gig I can hire?"

The wheelwright had noticed at a glance that the tilbury was a hired vehicle; he shrugget his shoulders.

"You take such good care of gigs you hire, that if I had one I would not let it to you."

"Well, one to sell me?"

"I have not one."

"What, not a tax-cart? I am not particular, as you see."

"This is a small place. I have certainly," the wheelwright added, "an old calèche in my stable, which belongs to a person in the town, and who uses it on the thirty-sixth of every month. I could certainly let it out to you, for it is no concern of mine, but the owner must not see it pass; and besides, it is a calèche, and will want two horses."

"I will hire post-horses."

"Where are you going to, sir?"

"To Arras."

"And you wish to arrive to-day?"

"Certainly."

"By taking post-horses?"

"Why not?"

"Does it make any difference to you if you reach Arras at four o'clock to-morrow morning?"

"Of course it does."

"There is one thing to be said about hiring post-horses—have you your passport, sir?"

"Yes."

"Well, if you take post-horses, you will not reach Arras before to-morrow. We are on a cross-country road. The relays are badly served, and the horses are out at work. This is the ploughing season, and as strong teams are required, horses are taken anywhere, from the post-houses like the rest. You will have to wait three or

four hours, sir, at each station, and only go at a foot-pace, for there are many hills to ascend."

"Well, I will ride. Take the horse out—I suppose I can purchase a saddle here?"

"Of course, but will this horse carry a saddle?"

"No, I remember now that it will not."

"In that case—?"

"But surely I can hire a saddle-horse in the village?"

"What, to go to Arras without a break?"

"Yes."

"You would want a horse such as is not to be found in these parts. In the first place, you would have to buy it, as you are a stranger, but you would not find one to buy or hire for 500 francs—not for a thousand."

"What is to be done?"

"The best thing is to let me mend the wheel and put off your journey till to-morrow."

"To-morrow will be too late."

"Hang it."

"Is there not the Arras mail-cart? When does that pass?"

"Not till to-night."

"What! you will take a whole day in mending that wheel?"

"An honest day."

"Suppose you employed two workmen?"

"Ay, if I had ten."

"Suppose the spokes were tied with cords?"

"What is to be done with the axle? Besides, the felloe is in a bad state."

"Is there any one who lets out vehicles in the town?"

"No."

"Is there another wheelwright?"

The ostler and the wheelwright replied simultaneously, "No."

He felt an immense joy, for it was evident that the Fates were interfering. It was they who had broken the tilbury wheel and stopped his journey. He had not yielded to

this species of first summons ; he had made every possible effort to continue his journey ; he had loyally and scrupulously exhausted all resources ; he had not recoiled before the season, fatigue, or expense ; and he had nothing to reproach himself with. If he did not go further, it did not concern him ; it was not his fault, it was not the doing of his conscience, but of Providence. He breathed freely and fully for the first time since Javert's visit. He felt as if the iron hand which had been squeezing his heart for twenty hours had relaxed its grasp ; GOD now appeared to be on his side, and declared Himself openly. He said to himself that he had done all in his power, and at present need only return home quietly.

Had the conversation with the wheelwright taken place in an inn-room, it would probably have not been heard by any one—matters would have remained in this state, and we should probably not have had to record any of the following events ; but the conversation took place in the street. Any colloquy in the street inevitably produces a crowd, for, there are always people who only ask to be spectators. While he was questioning the wheelwright, some passers-by stopped around, and a lad to whom no one paid any attention, after listening for some moments, ran off. At the instant when the traveller made up his mind to turn back, this boy returned, accompanied by an old woman.

"Sir," the woman said, "my boy tells me that you wish to hire a conveyance ?"

This simple remark, made by an old woman led by a child, made the perspiration pour down his back. He fancied he saw the hand which had let him loose reappear in the shadow behind him, ready to clutch him again. He replied,—

"Yes, my good woman, I want to hire a gig."

And he hastily added, "But there is not one in the town."

"Yes, there is," said the old woman.

"Where ?" the wheelwright remarked.

"At my house," the old crone answered.

He gave a start, for the fatal hand had seized him again. The poor woman really had a sort of wicker-cart under a shed. The wheelwright and the ostler, sorry to see the traveller escape them, interfered,—

“ It was a frightful rattletrap, and had no springs—it was true that the inside seats were hung with leathern straps—the rain got into it—the wheels were rusty, and ready to fall to pieces—it would not go much further than the tilbury—the gentleman had better not get into it ”—and so on.

All this was true, but the rattletrap, whatever it might be, rolled on two wheels, and could go to Arras. He paid what was asked, left the tilbury to be repaired against his return, had the horse put into the cart, got in, and went his way. At the moment when the cart moved ahead, he confessed to himself that a moment previously he had felt a sort of joy at the thought that he could not go where he was going. He examined this joy with a sort of passion, and found it absurd. Why did he feel joy at turning back ? After all, he was making this journey of his free will, and no one forced him to do so. And assuredly nothing could happen, except what he liked. As he was leaving Hesdin, he heard a voice shouting to him, “ Stop ! stop ! ” He stopped the cart with a hurried movement in which there was something feverish and convulsive that resembled joy. It was the old woman’s boy.

“ Sir,” he said, “ it was I who got you the cart.”

“ Well ? ”

“ You have given me nothing.”

He who gave to all, and so easily, considered this demand exorbitant, and almost odious.

“ Oh, it’s you, scamp,” he said ; “ well, you will not have anything.”

He flogged his horse, which started again at a smart trot. He had lost much time at Hesdin, and would have liked to recover it. The little horse was courageous, and worked for two ; but it was February, it had been raining, and the roads were bad. The cart, too, ran much

more heavily than the tilbury, and there were numerous ascents. He took nearly four hours in going from Hesdin to St. Pol : four hours for five leagues ! At St. Pol he pulled up at the first inn he came to, and had the horse put in a stable. As he had promised Schufflaire, he stood near the crib while it was eating, and had troubled and confused thoughts. The landlady entered the stable.

"Do you not wish to breakfast, sir ?"

"I did not think of it," he said, "but I am very hungry."

He followed the woman, who had a healthy, ruddy face ; she led him to a ground-floor room, in which were tables covered with oil-cloth.

"Make haste," he remarked, "for I am in a great hurry."

A plump Flemish servant-girl hastened to lay the cloth, and he looked at her with a feeling of comfort.

"That is what I wanted," he thought ; "I had not breakfasted."

He leaped upon the bread, bit a mouthful, and then slowly laid it back on the table, and did not touch it again. A waggoner was sitting at another table, and he said to him,—

"Why is their bread so bitter ?"

The waggoner was a German, and did not understand him ; he returned to his horse. An hour later he had left St. Pol, and was proceeding toward Tinqués, which is only five leagues from Arras. What did he do during the drive ? What was he thinking of ? As in the morning he looked at the trees, the roofs, the ploughed fields, and the diversities of a landscape which every turn in the road changes, as he passed them. To see a thousand different objects for the first and last time is most melancholy ! travelling is birth and death at every moment. Perhaps in the vaguest region of his mind he made a comparison between the changing horizon and human existence, for everything in this life is continually flying before us. Shadow and light are blended ; after a bedazzlement comes an eclipse ; every event is a turn in the road, and

all at once you are old. You feel something like a shock, all is black, you distinguish an obscure door, and the gloomy horse of life which dragged you, stops, and you see a veiled, unknown form unharnessing it. Twilight was setting in at the moment, when the schoolboys, leaving school, saw this traveller enter Tinquès. He did not halt there, but as he left the village, a road-mender, who was laying stones, raised his head, and said to him,—

"Your horse is very tired."

The poor brute, in fact, could not get beyond a walk.

"Are you going to Arras?" the road-mender continued.

"Yes."

"If you go at that pace, you will not reach it very soon."

He stopped his horse, and asked the road-mender,—

"How far is it from here to Arras?"

"Nearly seven long leagues."

"How so? the post-book says only five and a quarter leagues."

"Ah," the road-mender continued, "you do not know that the road is under repair; you will find it cut up about a mile further on, and it is impossible to pass."

"Indeed?"

"You must take the road on the left, that runs to Carency, and cross the river; when you reach Camblin you will turn to the right, for it is the Mont Saint Eloy road that runs to Arras."

"But I shall lose my way in the dark."

"You do not belong to these parts?"

"No."

"And it is a cross-road; stay, sir," the road-mender continued, "will you let me give you a piece of advice? Your horse is tired, so return to Tinquès, where there is a good inn; sleep there, and go to Arras to-morrow."

"I must be there to-night."

"That is different. In that case go back to the inn all the same, and hire a second horse. The stable boy will act as your guide across the country."

He took the road-mender's advice, turned back and

half an hour after passed the same spot at a sharp trot with a strong second horse. A stable lad, who called himself a postilion, was sitting on the shafts of the cart. Still he felt that he had lost time, for it was now dark. They entered the cross road, and it soon became frightful; the cart fell out of one rut into another, but he said to the postilion,—

“Keep on at a trot, and I will give you a double fee.”

In one of the jolts the trace-bar broke.

“The bar is broken, sir,” said the postilion, “and I do not know how to fasten my horse, and the road is very bad by night. If you will go back and sleep at Tinques, we can get to Arras at an early hour to-morrow.”

He answered, “Have you a piece of rope and a knife?”

“Yes, sir.”

He cut a branch and made a trace-bar; it was a further loss of twenty minutes, but they started again at a gallop. The plain was dark, and a low, black fog was creeping over the hills. A heavy wind, which came from the sea, made in all the corners of the horizon a noise like that of furniture being moved. All that he could see had an attitude of terror, for how many things shudder beneath the mighty breath of night! The cold pierced him, for he had eaten nothing since the previous morning. He vaguely recalled his other night-excursion on the great plain of D—— eight years before, and it seemed to him to be yesterday. A clock struck from a distant steeple, and he asked the lad,—

“What o’clock is that?”

“Seven, sir, and we shall be at Arras by eight, for we have only three leagues to go.”

At this moment he made for the first time this reflection—and considered it strange that it had not occurred to him before—that all the trouble he was taking was perhaps thrown away; he did not even know the hour for the trial, and he might at least have asked about that; it was extravagant to go on thus, without knowing if it would be of any service. Then he made some



mental calculations : usually the sittings of assize courts began at nine o'clock, this matter would not occupy much time, the theft of the apples would be easily proved, and then there would be merely the identification, four or five witnesses to hear, and little for counsel to say. He would arrive when it was all over.

The postilion flogged the horses ; they had crossed the river and left Mont Saint Eloy behind them ; the night was growing more and more dark.

---

## CHAPTER VI.

### SISTER SIMPLICE IS SORELY TRIED.

At this very moment Fantine was joyful. She had passed a very bad night, she had coughed fearfully, and her fever had become worse. In the morning, when the physician paid his visit, she was raving ; he felt alarmed, and begged to be sent for so soon as M. Madeleine arrived. All the morning she was gloomy, said little, and made folds in her sheet, while murmuring in a low voice, and calculating what seemed to be distances. Her eyes were hollow and fixed, they seemed almost extinct, and then, at moments, they were relit, and flashed like stars. It seems as if, on the approach of a certain dark hour, the brightness of heaven fills those whom the brightness of earth is quitting. Each time that Sister Simplicite asked her how she was, she invariably answered, " Well, but I should like to see M. Madeleine."

A few months previously, at the time when Fantine lost her last modesty, her last shame, and her last joy, she was the shadow of herself ; now she was the ghost. Physical suffering had completed the work of moral suffering. This creature of five-and-twenty years of age had a wrinkled forehead, sunken cheeks, a pinched nose, a leaden complexion, a bony neck, projecting shoulder-blades, thin limbs, an earthy skin, and white hairs were

mingled with the auburn. Alas ! how illness improvises old age ! At midday, the physician returned, wrote a prescription, inquired whether M. Madeleine had been to the infirmary, and shook his head. M. Madeleine usually came at three o'clock, and as punctuality was kindness, he was punctual. At about half-past two Fantine began to grow agitated, and in the next twenty minutes asked the nun more than ten times, "What o'clock is it ? "

Three o'clock struck : at the third stroke Fantine, who usually could scarce move in her bed, sat up ; she clasped her thin yellow hands in a sort of convulsive grasp, and the nun heard one of those deep sighs, which seem to remove a crushing weight, burst from her chest. Then Fantine turned and looked at the door ; but no one entered, and the door was not opened. She remained thus for a quarter of an hour, with her eyes fixed on the door, motionless, and holding her breath. The nun did not dare speak to her, and as the clock struck the quarter, Fantine fell back on her pillow. She said nothing, and began again making folds in her sheet. The half-hour passed, then the hour, and no one came. Each time the clock struck Fantine sat up, looked at the door, and then fell back again. Her thoughts could be clearly read, but she did not say a word, complain, or make any accusation : she merely coughed in a sad way. It seemed as if something dark was settling down on her, for she was livid, and her lips were blue. She smiled every now and then.

When five o'clock struck, the nun heard her say very softly and sweetly, "As I am going away to-morrow, it was wrong of him not to come to-day." Sister Simplice herself was surprised at M. Madeleine's delay. In the meanwhile Fantine looked up at the top of her bed, and seemed to be trying to remember something : all at once she began singing in a voice faint as a sigh. It was an old cradle-song with which she had in former times lulled her little Cosette to sleep, and which had not once recurred to her during the five years she had been parted

from her child. ' She sang with so sad a voice and to so soft an air, that it was enough to make any one weep, even a nun. The sister, who was accustomed to austere things, felt a tear in her eye. The clock struck, and Fantine did not seem to hear it: she appeared not to pay any attention to things around her. Sister Simplicie sent a servant-girl to inquire of the portress of the factory whether M. Madeleine had returned and would be at the infirmary soon: the girl came back in a few minutes. Fantine was still motionless and apparently engaged with her own thoughts. The servant told Sister Simplicie in a very low voice that the Mayor had set off before six o'clock that morning in a small tilbury; that he had gone alone, without a driver; that no one knew what direction he had taken, for while some said they had seen him going along the Arras road, others declared they had met him on the Paris road. He was, as usual, very gentle, and he had merely told his servant she need not expect him that night.

While the two women were whispering with their backs turned to Fantine, the sister questioning, and the servant conjecturing, Fantine, with the feverish vivacity of certain organic maladies which blend the free movements of health with the frightful weakness of death, had knelt up in bed, with her two clenched hands supported by the pillow, and listened with her head thrust between the curtains. All at once she cried,—

"You are talking about M. Madeleine: why do you whisper? what is he doing, and why does he not come?"

Her voice was so loud and hoarse that the two women fancied it a man's voice, and they turned round in alarm.

"Answer!" Fantine cried.

The servant stammered,—

"The portress told me that he could not come to-day."

"My child," the sister said, "be calm and lie down again."

Fantine, without changing her attitude, went on in a loud voice and with an accent at once imperious and heartrending,—

"He cannot come: why not? you know the reason. You were whispering it to one another, and I insist on knowing."

The servant hastily whispered in the nun's ear, "Tell her that he is engaged at the Municipal Council."

Sister Simplice blushed slightly, for it was a falsehood that the servant proposed to her. On the other hand, it seemed to her that telling the patient the truth would doubtless deal her a terrible blow, and this was serious in Fantine's present condition. The blush lasted but a little while; the sister fixed her calm sad eye on Fantine, and said,—

"The Mayor is gone on a journey."

Fantine rose and sat up on her heels, her eyes sparkled, and an ineffable joy shone on her sad face.

"He has gone to fetch Cosette," she exclaimed.

Then she raised her hands to heaven, and her lips moved: she was praying. When she had finished she said, "My sister, I am willing to lie down again and do everything you wish: I was naughty just now. I ask your pardon for having spoken so loud, for I know that is wrong, good sister: but, look you, I am so happy. God is good, and M. Madeleine is good: only think, he has gone to Montfermeil to fetch my little Cosette."

She lay down again, helped the nun to smooth her pillow, and kissed a little silver cross she wore on her neck, and which Sister Simplice had given her.

"My child," the sister said, "try to go to sleep now and do not speak any more."

"He started this morning for Paris, and indeed had no occasion to go there; for Montfermeil is a little to the left before you get there. You remember how he said to me yesterday when I asked him about Cosette, 'Soon, soon'? He wishes to offer me a surprise, for, do you know, he made me sign a letter to get her back from the Thénardiens. They cannot refuse to give up Cosette, can they? for they are paid; the authorities would not allow a child to be kept, for now there is nothing owing. Sister, do not make me signs that I

must not speak, for I am extremely happy : I am going on very well, I feel no pain at all ; I am going to see Cosette again, and I even feel very hungry. It is nearly five years since I saw her : you cannot imagine how a mother clings to her child—and then she must be so pretty. She has such pretty pink fingers, and she will have beautiful hands. She must be a pretty girl now, for she is going on for seven. I call her Cosette, but her real name is Euphrasie. This morning I was looking at the dust on the mantelpiece, and I had a notion that I should soon see Cosette again. Good Lord ! how wrong it is for a mother to be so many years without seeing her child ! she ought to reflect that life is not eternal. Oh ! how kind it is of the Mayor to go ! Is it true that it is so cold ? I hope he took his cloak. He will be here again to-morrow, will he not ? and we will make a holiday of it. To-morrow morning, sister, you will remind me to put on my little cap with the lace border. Montfermeil is a great distance, and I came from there to this town on foot, and it took me a long time ; but the stage coaches travel so quickly ! He will be here to-morrow with Cosette. How far is it to Montfermeil ? ”

The sister, who had no notion of distances, answered, “ Oh, I believe he can be here to-morrow.”

“ To-morrow ! to-morrow ! ” said Fantine ; “ I shall see Cosette to-morrow ! my good sister. I am not ill now ; I feel wild, and would dance if you permitted me.”

Any one who had seen her a quarter of an hour before would not have understood it ; she was now quite flushed, she spoke with an eager, natural voice, and her whole face was a smile. At times she laughed while speaking to herself in a low voice. A mother’s joy is almost a childish joy.

“ Well ! ” the nun said, “ you are now happy. So obey me and do not speak any more.”

Fantine laid her head on the pillow, and said in a low voice, “ Yes, lie down, behave yourself, as you are going to have your child. Sister Simplicie is right : all in this place are right.”

And then without stirring, without moving her head, she began looking around with widely opened eyes and a joyous air, and said nothing more. The sister closed the curtains, hoping she would fall off to sleep. The physician arrived between seven and eight o'clock. Hearing no sound, he fancied Fantine asleep. He entered softly and walked up to the bed on tip-toe. He opened the curtains, and by the light of the lamp saw Fantine's large calm eyes fixed on him. She said to him,—

"Oh, sir, my child will be allowed to sleep in a little cot by my bedside?"

The physician fancied she was delirious. She added,—

"Only look; there is exactly room."

The physician took Sister Simplice on one side, who explained the matter to him: that M. Madeleine was absent for a day or two, and being in doubt they had not thought it right to undeceive the patient, who fancied that he had gone to Montfermeil, and she might possibly be in the right. The physician approved, and returned to Fantine's bed, who said to him,—

"In the morning, when the kitten wakes up, I will say good-day to her, and at night I, who do not sleep, will listen to her sleeping. Her gentle little breathing will do me good."

"Give me your hand," said the physician.

"Oh yes, you do not know that I am cured. Cosette arrives to-morrow."

The physician was surprised to find her better: the oppression was slighter, her pulse had regained strength, and a sort of recovered life was animating the poor exhausted girl.

"Doctor," she continued, "has the sister told you that M. Madeleine has gone to fetch my darling?"

The physician recommended silence, and that any painful emotion should be avoided: he prescribed a dose of quinine, and if the fever returned in the night, a sedative; and as he went away, he said to the sister: "She is better. If the Mayor were to arrive with the child to-morrow, I do not know what would happen:

there are such astounding crises, great joy has been known to check diseases, and though hers is an organic malady, and in an advanced stage, it is all a mystery ; —we might perchance save her."

## CHAPTER VII.

## AT ARRAS.

It was nearly eight in the evening when the cart we left on the road drove under the archway of the post house at Arras. The man whom we have followed up to this moment got out, discharged the second horse, and himself led the white pony to the stables ; then he pushed open the door of a billiard room on the ground-floor, sat down, and rested his elbows on the table. He had taken fourteen hours in a journey for which he had allowed himself six. He did himself the justice that it was no fault of his, but in his heart he was not sorry at it. The landlady came in.

"Will you sleep here, sir ? "

He nodded in the negative.

"The ostler says that your horse is extremely tired."

"Will it not be able to start again to-morrow morning ? "

"Oh ! dear no, sir ; it requires at least two days' rest."

"Is not the post-office in this house ? "

"Yes, sir."

The landlady led him to the office, where he showed his passport, and inquired whether he could return to M—— the same night by the mail cart. Only one seat was vacant, and he took it and paid for it. "Do not fail, sir," said the clerk, "to be here at one o'clock precisely."

This done, he left the hotel, and began walking about the streets. He was not acquainted with Arras, the

streets were dark, and he walked about hap-hazard, but he seemed obstinately determined not to ask his way of passers-by. He crossed the little river Crinchon, and found himself in a labyrinth of narrow lanes, in which he lost his way. A citizen came toward him with a lantern, whom, after some hesitation, he resolved to address, though not till he had looked before and behind him, as if afraid lest anybody should overhear the question he was about to ask.

"Will you be kind enough to tell me the way to the courts of justice, sir?" he said.

"You do not belong to the town, sir?" replied the man, who was rather old; "well, follow me. I am going in the direction of the courts, that is to say of the Prefecture, for the courts are under repair at present, and the sittings take place temporarily at the Prefecture."

"Are the assizes held there?" he asked.

"Of course, sir; you must know that what is now the Prefecture was the Bishop's palace before the Revolution. Monsieur de Conzié, who was Bishop in '92, had a large hall built there, and the trials take place in this hall."

On the road, the citizen said to him,—

"If you wish to witness a trial you are rather late, for the court usually closes at six o'clock."

However, when they arrived in the great square the old man showed him four lofty lighted windows in a vast gloomy building.

"On my word, sir," he said, "you have arrived in time, and are in luck's way. Do you see those four windows? they belong to the assize courts. As there are lights, it is not closed yet: there must have been a long trial, and they are having an evening session. Are you interested in the trial? is it a criminal offence, or are you a witness?"

He answered,—

"I have not come for any trial: I only wish to speak to a solicitor."



"That is different. That is the door, sir, where the sentry is standing. and you have only to go up the large staircase."

He followed the old man's instruction, and a few minutes later was in a large hall, in which there were a good many people and groups of robed barristers were gossiping together. It is always a thing that contracts the heart, to see these assemblies of men dressed in black, conversing in a low voice on the threshold of a court of justice. It is rare for charity and pity to be noticed in their remarks, for they generally express condemnations settled before trial. All such groups appear to the thoughtful observer so many gloomy hives, in which buzzing minds build in community all sorts of dark edifices. This hall, which was large and only lighted by one lamp, served as a waiting-room: and folding doors, at this moment closed, separated it from the grand chamber in which the assizes were being held. The obscurity was so great, that he was not afraid of addressing the first barrister he came across.

"How is it going, sir?" he said.

"It is finished."

"Finished!" This word was repeated with such an accent, that the barrister turned round.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but perhaps you are a relative?"

"No, I know no one here. Was a verdict of guilty brought in?"

"Of course; it could not possibly be otherwise."

"The galleys?"

"For life."

He continued in a voice so faint that it was scarce audible,—

"Then, the identity was proved?"

"What identity?" the barrister retorted. "Nothing of the sort was required; the affair was simple—the woman had killed her child, the infanticide was proved, the jury recommended her to mercy, and she was sentenced to imprisonment for life."

"You are alluding to a woman, then?"

"Why, of course; a girl of the name of Limosin. To whom were you referring, pray?"

"To nobody; but as the trial is over, how is it that the court is still lighted?"

"It is for the other trial which began about two hours back."

"What other trial?"

"Oh, it is clear too: he is a sort of beggar, a relapsed galley slave, who has been robbing. I forget his name, but he has a regular bandit face, on the strength of which I would send him to the galleys if for nothing else."

"Is there any way of entering the court, sir?" he asked.

"I do not think so, for it is very full. Still, the trial is suspended, and some persons have gone out. When the court resumes, you can try."

"Which is the way in?"

"By that large door."

The barrister left him; in a few minutes he had experienced almost simultaneously, and confusedly blended, every emotion possible. The words of this indifferent person had by turns pierced his heart like needles of ice and like red-hot sword-blades. When he found that the trial was not over, he breathed again; but he could not have said whether what he felt were satisfaction or pain. He walked up to several groups and listened to what they were saying; as the trial list was very heavy, the President had selected for this day two simple and short affairs. They had begun with the infanticide, and were now engaged with the relapsed convict, the "return horse." This man had stolen apples, but it was proved that he had already been at the Toulon galleys. It was this that made his affair bad. His examination and the deposition of the witnesses were over; but there were still the speech for the defence and the summing up, and hence it would not be over till midnight. The man would probably be condemned, for the public prosecutor was sharp, and did not "miss" his person; he was a witty

fellow who wrote verses. An usher was standing near the door communicating with the court, and he asked him,—

“Will this door be opened soon?”

“It will not be opened,” said the usher.

“Will it not be opened when the court resumes its sitting?”

“It has resumed,” the usher replied, “but the door will not be opened.”

“Why not?”

“Because the hall is full.”

“What! is there no room?”

“Not for a soul more. The door is closed, and no one can go in.”

The usher added after a pause. “There are certainly two or three seats behind the President, but he only admits public officials to them.”

After saying this, the usher turned his back on him. He withdrew with hanging head, crossed the waiting-room, and slowly went down the stairs, hesitating at every step. He was probably holding counsel with himself; the violent combat which had been going on in him since the previous day was not finished, and every moment he entered some new phase. On reaching the landing he leant against the banisters and folded his arms; but all at once he took his pocket-book, tore a leaf from it, wrote in pencil upon it, “M. Madeleine, Mayor of M. sur M. ;” then he hurried up the stairs, cleft the crowd, walked up to the usher, handed him the paper, and said to him with an air of authority, “Hand this to the President.” The usher took the paper, glanced at it, and obeyed.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### INSIDE THE COURT.

WITHOUT suspecting the fact, the Mayor of M—— enjoyed a species of celebrity. During the seven years that his re-

putation for virtue had filled the whole of the Bas Boulonnais, it had gradually crossed the borderline into two or three adjoining departments. In addition to the considerable service he had done the chief town, by restoring the glass-bead trade, there was not one of the one hundred and forty parishes in the bailiwick of M—— which was not indebted to him for some kindness. He had ever assisted and promoted, when necessary, the trades of other departments ; thus he had supported, with his credit and funds, the tulle factory at Boulogne ; the flax-spinning machine at Nivers, and the hydraulic manufacture of canvas at Bourbus sur Cauche. The name of M. Madeleine was everywhere pronounced with veneration, and Arras and Douai envied the fortunate little town of M—— its Mayor. The Councillor of the Royal Court of Douai, who presided at the present Arras assizes, like every one else, was acquainted with this deeply and universally honoured name. When the usher discreetly opened the door of the judges' robing room, leant over the President's chair, and handed him the paper, adding, " This gentleman wishes to hear the trial," the President made a deferential movement, took up a pen, wrote a few words at the foot of the paper, and returned it to the usher, saying, " Show him in."

The unhappy man whose history we are recording had remained near the door of the court at the same spot and in the same attitude as when the usher left him. He heard through his reverie some one say to him, " Will you do me the honour of following me, sir ? " It was the same usher who had turned his back on him just before and was now bowing to the ground. At the same time the usher handed him the paper ; he unfolded it, and as he happened to be near the lamps he was able to read, " The President of the Assize Court presents his respects to M. Madeleine." He crumpled the paper in his hands, as if the words had a strange and bitter after-taste for him. He followed the usher, and a few minutes later found himself alone in a stern-looking room, lighted by two wax candles standing on a green-baize-covered table. He still

had in his ears the last words of the usher, who had just left him, "You are in the Board's withdrawing-room; you have only to turn the handle of that door, and you will find yourself in court behind the President's chair." These words were mingled in his thoughts with a confused recollection of narrow passages and black staircases, which he had just passed through. The usher had left him alone—the supreme moment had arrived. He tried to collect himself, but could not succeed; for it is especially in the hours when men have the most need of thought that all the threads are broken in the brain. He was at the actual spot where the judges deliberate and pass sentence. He gazed with stupid tranquillity at this peaceful and yet formidable room, in which so many existences had been broken, where his name would be echoed ere long, and which his destiny was traversing at this moment. He looked at the walls and then at himself, astonished that it was this room and that it was he. He had not eaten for more than twenty-four hours, he was fagged by the shaking of the cart, but he did not feel it; it seemed to him that he did not feel anything. He walked up to a black frame hanging on the wall, and which contained under glass an autograph letter of Jean Nicolas Pache, Mayor of Paris, and Minister, dated, doubtless in error, Juin 9 an II., and in which Pache sent to the commune a list of the ministers and deputies under arrest at their own houses. Any who saw him at this moment would doubtless have imagined that this letter appeared to him very curious, for he did not remove his eyes from it, and read it two or three times. But he read it without paying attention; and unconsciously he was thinking of Fantine and Cosette.

While thinking he turned, and his eyes met the brass handle of the door that separated him from the assize court. He had almost forgotten this door, but his eye, at first calm, rested on it, then became wild and fixed, and was gradually filled with terror. Drops of perspiration stood out between his hair and poured down his temples. At one moment he made with a species of authority

blended with rebellion that indescribable gesture which means and says so well, "By Heaven, who forces me?" Then he turned hurriedly, and saw before him the door by which he had come in, walked up, opened it, and went out. He was no longer in that room, but in a passage, a long narrow passage, cut up by steps and wickets, making all sorts of turns, lit up here and there by lamps resembling sick persons' night-lights—the passage by which he had come. He breathed, he listened, not a sound behind him, not a sound before him, and he began to fly as if he were pursued. When he had passed several turnings, he listened again—there were still the same silence and gloom around him. He panted, tottered, and leant against the wall; the stone was cold, the perspiration was frozen on his forehead, and he drew himself up with a shudder. Then standing there alone, trembling from cold, and perhaps from something else, he thought. He had thought all night, he had thought all day; but he only heard within a voice that said, *Alas!*

A quarter of an hour passed thus; at length he inclined his head, sighed with agony, let his arms droop, and turned back. He walked slowly and as if stunned; it looked as if he had been caught up in his flight, and was being brought back. He entered the Board's room, and the first thing he saw was the handle of the door. This handle, which was round and made of polished brass, shone for him like a terrific star; he looked at it as a sheep would look at the eye of a tiger. His eyes would not leave it, and from time to time he took a step which brought him nearer to the door. Had he listened he would have heard, like a species of confused murmur, the noise in the adjoining court, but he did not listen and did not hear. All at once, and without knowing how, he found himself close to the door; he convulsively seized the handle, and the door opened. He was in the assize court.

---

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE TRIAL.

HE advanced a step, closed the door mechanically after him, and gazed at the scene before him. It was a dimly-lighted large hall, at one moment full of sounds, and at another of silence, in which all the machinery of a criminal trial was displayed, with its paltry and lugubrious gravity, in the midst of a crowd. At one of the ends of the hall, the one where he was, judges with a vacant look in shabby gowns, biting their nails or shutting their eyelids; barristers in all sorts of attitudes; soldiers with honest, harsh faces; old stained wainscoting, a dirty ceiling; tables covered with baize, which was rather yellow than green; doors blackened by hands; pot-house sconces that produced more smoke than light, hanging from nails driven into the wall: upon the tables brass candlesticks—all was obscurity, ugliness, and sadness. But all this yet produced an austere and august impression, for the grand human thing called law, and the great divine thing called justice, could be felt in it.

No one in this crowd paid any attention to him, for all eyes converged on a single point—a wooden bench placed against a little door, along the wall on the left of the President; on this bench, which was illumined by several candles, sat a man between two gendarmes. This man was the man; he did not seek him, he saw him; his eyes went there naturally, as if they had known beforehand where that face was. He fancied he saw himself, aged, not absolutely alike in face, but exactly similar in attitude and appearance, with his bristling hair, with his savage, restless eyeballs, and the blouse, just as he was on the day when he entered D——, full of hatred, and concealing in his mind that hideous treasure of frightful thoughts which he had spent nineteen years in collecting on the pavement of the bagne. He said to himself with a shudder, "Great God, shall I become again like that?"

This being appeared to be at least sixty years of age ; he had something about him rough, stupid, and startled. On hearing the sound of the door, persons made way for the newcomer, the President had turned his head, and guessing that the gentleman who had just entered was the Mayor of M——, he bowed to him. The public prosecutor, who had seen M. Madeleine at M——, whither his duties had more than once called him, recognized him and also bowed. He scarce noticed it, for he was under a species of hallucination ; he was looking at a judge, a clerk, gendarmes, a number of cruelly curious faces—he had seen all this once, formerly, seven-and-twenty years ago. These mournful things he found again—they were there, stirring, existing ; it was no longer an effort of his memory, a mirage of his mind ; they were real gendarmes, real judges, a real crowd, and real men in flesh and bone. He saw all the monstrous aspects of his past reappear, and live again around him, with all the terror that reality possesses. All this was yawning before him ; he felt terrified, closed his eyes, and exclaimed in the depths of his mind, Never ! And by a tragic sport of fate which made all his ideas terrible and rendered him nearly mad, it was another himself who was there. This man who was being tried everybody called Jean Valjean. He had before him an unheard-of vision, a species of representation of the most horrible moment of his life played by his phantom. All was there—it was the same machinery, the same hour of the night, almost the same faces of judges, soldiers, and spectators. The only difference was that there was a crucifix over the President's head, which had been removed from the courts at the time of his condemnation. When he was tried God was absent. There was a chair behind him, into which he fell, terrified by the idea that people could see him. When he was seated he took advantage of a pile of pasteboard cases on the Judge's desk to hide his face from the spectators. He could now see without being seen : he fully regained the feeling of the real, and gradually recovered. He attained that phase of calmness in which a man can listen.



Monsieur Bamaibois was serving on the jury. He looked for Javert, but could not see him, for the witnesses' bench was hidden by the clerk's table, and then, as we have said, the court was hardly lighted.

At the moment when he came in, the counsel for the defence was ending his speech. The attention of all was excited to the highest pitch ; for three hours they had seen a man, a stranger, a species of miserable being, deeply stupid, or deeply clever, being gradually crushed by the weight of a terrible resemblance. This man, as we know already, was a vagabond who was found in a field carrying a branch covered with ripe apples, which had been broken off a tree in a neighbouring orchard. Who was this man ? Inquiries had been made, and witnesses heard ; they were unanimous, and light had issued from every incident of the trial. The prosecutor said, " We have got hold not only of a fruit-stealer, a marauder, but we hold under our hand a bandit, a man who has broken his ban, an ex-convict, a most dangerous villain, a malefactor of the name of Jean Valjean, whom justice has been seeking for a long time, and who, eight years ago, on leaving Toulon, committed a highway robbery with violence on a Savoyard lad, called Little Gervais, a crime provided for by Article 383 of the penal code, for which we intend to prosecute him hereafter, when the identity has been judicially proved. He has just committed a fresh robbery, and that is a case of relapse. Find him guilty of the new offence, and he will be tried at a later date for the old one." The prisoner seemed highly amazed at this accusation and the unanimity of the witnesses ; he made gestures and signs, intended to deny, or else looked at the ceiling. He spoke with difficulty, answered with embarrassment, but from head to foot his whole person denied. He was like an idiot in the presence of all these intellects ranged in battle-array round him, and like a stranger in the midst of this society which seized him. Still, a most menacing future was hanging over him ; the probability of his being Jean Valjean increased with each moment, and the entire crowd regarded with greater

anxiety than himself the sentence full of calamity which was gradually settling down on him. An eventuality even offered a glimpse of a death-penalty, should the identity be proved, and he was hereafter found guilty of the attack on little Gervais. Who was this man? of what nature was his apathy? Was it imbecility or cunning? Did he understand too much, or did he understand nothing at all? These questions divided the crowd and the jury seemed to share their opinion. There was in this trial something terrific and something puzzling; the drama was not only gloomy, but it was obscure.

The counsel for the defence had argued rather cleverly, in that provincial language which for a long time constituted the eloquence of the bar, and which all barristers formerly employed, not only at Paris but at Romorantin or Montbrison, and which at the present day, having become classical, is only spoken by public prosecutors, whom it suits through its serious sonorousness and majestic movements. It is the language in which a husband is called a "consort;" a wife, a "spouse;" Paris, "the centre of the arts and of civilization;" the king, "the Monarch;" the bishop, a "holy Pontiff;" the public prosecutor, the "eloquent interpreter of the majesty of the law;" the pleadings, the "accents which we have just heard;" the age of Louis XIV., "the great age;" a theatre, the "temple of Melpomene;" the reigning family, the "august blood of our kings;" a concert, "a musical solemnity;" the general commanding the department, the "illustrious warrior who, etc.;" the pupils of the seminary, "those tender Levites;" the mistakes imputed to the newspapers, "the imposture which distils its venom in the columns of these organs," etc., etc. The barrister had, consequently, begun by explaining away the robbery of the apples—rather a difficult thing in this grand style; but Benigne Bossuet himself was obliged to allude to a fowl in the midst of a formal speech, and got out of the difficulty with glory, and that is more than Fitzroy Kelly did in Tawel the Quaker's case. The barrister had established the fact

that the apple robbery was not materially proved—his client, whom, in his quality as defender, he persistently called Champmathieu, had not been seen by any one scaling a wall or breaking the branch; he had been arrested with the branch in his possession, but he declared that he found it on the ground and picked it up. Where was the proof of the contrary? This branch had been broken off and then thrown away by the frightened robber, for doubtless there was one. But where was the evidence that Champmathieu was a robber? Only one thing, his being an ex-convict. The counsel did not deny that this fact seemed unluckily proved. The prisoner had lived at Faverolles; he had been a wood-cutter; the name of Champmathieu might possibly be derived from Jean Mathieu; lastly, four witnesses unhesitatingly recognized Champmathieu as the galley slave, Jean Valjean. To these indications, to this testimony, the counsel could only oppose his client's denial, which was certainly interested; but, even supposing that he was the convict Jean Mathieu, did that prove he was the apple-stealer? It was a presumption at the most, but not a proof. The accused, it was true—and his counsel was obliged "in his good faith" to allow it—had adopted a bad system of defence: he insisted in denying everything—not merely the robbery, but his quality as convict. A confession on the latter point would have doubtless been better, and gained him the indulgence of his judges; his counsel had advised him to do so, but the prisoner had obstinately refused, probably in the belief that he would save everything by confessing nothing. This was wrong, but should not his scanty intellect be taken into consideration? This man was visibly stupid: a long misery at the galleys, a long wretchedness out of them, had brutalized him, etc., etc.; his defence was bad, but was that a reason to find him guilty? As for the offence on Little Gervais, the counsel need not argue that, as it was not included in the indictment. The counsel wound up by imploring the jury and the court, if the identity of Jean Valjean appeared to them proved, to

punish him as a criminal who had broken his ban, and not apply the fearful chastisement which falls on the relapsed convict.

The public prosecutor replied. He was violent and flowery, as public prosecutors usually are. He congratulated the counsel for the defence on his "fairness," and cleverly took advantage of it; he attacked the prisoner with all the concessions which his counsel had made. He appeared to allow that the prisoner was Jean Valjean, and he therefore was so. This was so much gained for the prosecution, and could not be contested; and here, reverting cleverly to the sources and causes of criminality, the public prosecutor thundered against the immorality of the romantic school, at that time in its dawn under the name of the "Satanic school," which the critics of the *Quotidienne* and the *Oriflamme* had given it; and he attributed, not without some show of reason, the crime of Champmathieu, or to speak more correctly, of Jean Valjean, to this perverse literature. These reflections exhausted, he passed to Jean Valjean himself. Who was this Jean Valjean? Here came a description of Jean Valjean, a monster in human form, etc. The model of this sort of description will be found in the recitation of Theramène, which is not only useful to tragedy, but daily renders great services to judicial eloquence. The audience and the jury "quivered," and when the description was ended, the public prosecutor went on, with an oratorical outburst intended to excite to the highest pitch the enthusiasm of the country papers which would appear the next morning. "And it is such a man, etc., etc., etc., a vagabond, a beggar, having no means of existence, etc., etc., etc., accustomed through his past life to culpable actions, and but little corrected by confinement in the *bagne*, as is proved by the crime committed on Little Gervais, etc., etc., etc.,—it is such a man, who, found on the highroad with the proof of robbery in his hand, and a few paces from the wall he had climbed over, denies the fact, the robbery, denies everything, even to his name and his identity. In addition to a hundred proofs to which we

will not revert, four witnesses recognize him—Javert the upright Inspector of Police, and three of his old comrades in ignominy, the convicts Brevet, Chenildieu, and Cochepaille. And what does he oppose to this crushing unanimity? He denies. What hardness of heart! But you will do justice, gentlemen of the jury, etc., etc., etc.”

While the public prosecutor was speaking, the prisoner listened with open mouth, and with a sort of amazement in which there was certainly some admiration. He was evidently surprised that a man could speak like this. From time to time, at the most energetic apostrophes, when eloquence unable to restrain itself, overflows in a flux of branding epithets, and envelops the prisoner in a tempest, he slowly moved his head from right to left, and from left to right, in a sort of dumb and melancholy protest, with which he had contented himself ever since the beginning of the trial. Twice or thrice the spectators standing nearest to him heard him say in a low voice: “All this comes from not asking Monsieur Baloup.” The public prosecutor drew the attention of the jury to this dull attitude, which was evidently calculated, and which denoted, not imbecility, but skill, cunning, and the habit of deceiving justice, and which brought out in full light the “profound perverseness” of this man. He concluded by reserving the affair of Little Gervais, and by demanding a severe sentence. The counsel for the defence rose, began by complimenting the public prosecutor on his “admirable speech,” and then replied as well as he could, but feebly; it was plain that the ground was giving way under him.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE SYSTEM OF DENEGATIONS.

THE moment for closing the trial had arrived: the President ordered the prisoner to stand up, and asked him the usual question: “Have you anything to add to your

defence ? ” The man, who was rolling in his hands the hideous cap he had, made no reply, and the President repeated his question. This time the man heard, and seemed to understand ; he moved like a person who is waking up, looked around him, at the public, the gendarmes, his counsel, the jury, and the court, laid his monstrous fist on the woodwork in front of his bench, and, suddenly fixing his eyes on the public prosecutor, began to speak. It was an eruption ; from the way in which the words escaped from his lips, incoherent, impetuous, and pell-mell, it seemed as if they were all striving to get out before each other. He said :

I have this to say. That I was a wheelwright in Paris, and worked for Master Baloup. It is a hard trade is a wheelwright's ; you always work in the open air, in yards, under sheds when you have a good master, but never in a room, because you want space, look you. In winter you are so cold that you swing your arms to warm you, but the masters don't like that, for they say it wastes time. Handling iron when there is ice between the stones is rough work : it soon uses a man up. You are old when quite young in that trade. At forty a man is finished. I was fifty-three, and had hard lines of it. And then the workmen are so unkind. When a man is not so young as he was, they call him an old canary, an old brute ! I only earned thirty sous a day, for the masters took advantage of my age, and paid me as little as they could. With that I had my daughter, who was a washerwoman in the river. She earned a little for her part, and the pair of us managed to live. She was bothered too. All day in a tub up to your waist, in the snow and rain, and with the wind that cuts your face. When it freezes it is all the same, for you must wash ; there are persons who have not much linen, and expect it home ; if a woman did not wash she would lose her customers. The planks are badly joined, and drops of water fall on you everywhere. Her petticoats were wet through, over and under. That penetrates. She also worked at the wash-house of the *Enfants rouges*, where the water is got from taps. You

are no longer in the tub ; you wash at the tap before you, and rinse in the basin behind you. As it is shut up, you don't feel so cold. But there is a stream of hot water which ruins your sight. She came home at seven in the evening, and went to bed directly, for she was so tired. Her husband used to beat her. He is dead. We were not very happy. She was a good girl, who did not go to balls, and was very quiet. I remember a Shrove-Tuesday, on which she went to bed at eight o'clock. I am telling the truth. You need only inquire. Oh yes, inquire ! What an ass I am. Paris is a gulf. Who is there that knows Father Champmathieu ? And yet, I tell you, Monsieur Baloup. Ask him. After all, I do not know what you want of me."

The man ceased speaking and remained standing ; he had said all this in a loud, quick, hoarse, hard voice, with a sort of wretched and savage energy. Once he broke off to bow to somebody in the crowd. The affirmations which he seemed to throw out haphazard came from him in gasps, and he accompanied each by the gesture of a man who is chopping wood. When he had finished, his hearers burst into a laugh ; he looked at the public, seeing they were laughing, and understanding nothing, he began to laugh himself. That did him mischief. The President, a grave and kind man, began speaking. He reminded the " gentlemen of the jury " that " Monsieur Baloup, formerly a wheelwright in whose service the accused declared that he had been, was a bankrupt, and had not been found when an attempt was made to serve him with a subpoena." Then, turning to the prisoner, he requested him to listen to what he was about to say, and added : " You are in a situation which should cause you to reflect. The heaviest presumptions are weighing upon you, and may entail capital punishment. Prisoner, I ask you for the last time to explain yourself clearly on the two following facts : In the first place, did you, yes or no, climb over the wall, break a branch, and steal apples, that is to say, commit robbery with escalade ? Secondly, yes or no, are you the liberated convict, Jean Valjean ?

The prisoner shook his head with a confident air, like a man who understands and knows what answer he is going to make. He opened his mouth, turned to the President and said,—

“In the first place——”

Then he looked at his cap, looked at the ceiling, and held his tongue.

“Prisoner,” the public prosecutor said in a stern voice, “pay attention. You make no answer to the questions that are asked you, and your confusion condemns you. It is evident that your name is not Champmathieu, but Jean Valjean, at first concealed under the name of Jean Mathieu, your mother’s name; that you went to Auvergne; that your birthplace is Faverolles, and that you are a woodcutter. It is evident that you stole ripe apples by clambering over a wall, and the gentlemen of the jury will appreciate the fact.”

The prisoner had sat down again, but he hurriedly rose when the public prosecutor had finished, and exclaimed,—

“You are a wicked man. This is what I wanted to say, but I could not think of it at first. I have stolen nothing, for I am a man who does not eat every day. I was coming from Ailly, and walking after a flood, which had made the whole country yellow, the very ponds had overflowed, and nothing grew in the sand except a few little blades of grass by the roadside. I found a branch with apples lying on the ground, and picked it up, little thinking that it would bring me into trouble. I have been in prison and bullied for three months, and after that people talk against me, I don’t know why, and say to me, Answer. The gendarme, who is a good-hearted fellow, nudges me with his elbow, and says, Why don’t you answer? I cannot explain myself, for I am no scholar but only a poor man, and you are wrong not to see it. I have not stolen, I only picked up things lying on the ground. You talk about Jean Valjean and Jean Mathieu. I do not know these persons, they are countrymen. I used to work for Monsieur Baloup, Boulevard de l’Hôpital, and my name is Champmathieu. You are a



very clever fellow to tell me where I was born, for I don't know. It is not everybody who has a house to come into the world in. That would be too comfortable. I believe that my father and mother were persons who went about the roads, but I do not know it after all. When I was a boy I was called little, and now I am called old. Those are my Christian names, and you can take them as you please. I have been in Auvergne. I have been at Faverolles. Well, hang it, may not a man have been at those two places without having been to the galleys? I tell you that I have not stolen, and that my name is Champmathieu. I worked for M. Baloup, and lived in his house. You will vex me in the end with your nonsense. Why is everybody so spiteful against me?"

The public prosecutor, who had not sat down, here addressed the President.

"In the presence of these confused but very clear denials on the part of the prisoner, who would like to pass for an idiot, but will not succeed, we warn him—we request that it may please you, sir, and the court to recall the prisoners Brevet, Cochepaillé, and Chenildieu, and police Inspector Javert, and examine them again as to the identity of the prisoner with Jean Valjean."

"I must remark," said the President, "that Inspector Javert, having been recalled to his duties at a neighbouring town, left the hall and the town immediately after giving his evidence; we authorized him to do so with the consent of the public prosecutor and the counsel for the defence."

"Perfectly correct, sir," the public prosecutor continued. "In the absence of Inspector Javert, I believe it my duty to remind the gentlemen of the jury of the statement he made here a few hours ago. Javert is a worthy man, who honours by his rigorous and strict probity inferior but important functions. His evidence is as follows: 'I do not require moral presumptions and material proof to contradict the prisoner's assertions, for I recognize him perfectly. This man's name is not Champmathieu, he is Jean Valjean, an ex-convict of a

very violent and formidable character. It was with great reluctance that he was liberated when he completed his time. He had nineteen years' hard labour for qualified robbery, and made five or six attempts to escape. In addition to the Little Gervais robbery and the larceny of the apples, I also suspect him of a robbery committed in the house of his Grandeur the late Bishop of D——. I frequently saw him when I was assistant-gaoler at Toulon, and I repeat that I recognize him perfectly."

Such a precise declaration seemed to produce a lively effect on the audience and the jury, and the public prosecutor wound up by requesting that the other three witnesses should be brought in and re-examined. The President gave an order to an usher, and a moment after the door of the witness-room opened. The usher, accompanied by a gendarme, brought in the prisoner Brevet. The audience were all in suspense, and their chests heaved as if they had but one soul among them. The ex-convict Brevet wore the black and grey jacket of the central prisoners; he was a man of about sixty years of age, who had the face of a business man and the look of a rogue—these are sometimes seen together. He had become a sort of gaoler in the prison to which new offences had brought him, and was a man of whom the officials said, "He tries to make himself useful." The chaplains bore good testimony to his religious habits, and it must not be forgotten that this trial took place under the Restoration.

"Brevet," said the President, "as you have undergone a degrading punishment, you cannot be sworn."

Brevet looked down humbly.

"Still," the President continued, "there may remain, by the permission of Heaven, a feeling of honour and equity even in the man whom the law has degraded, and it is to that feeling I appeal in this decisive hour. If it still exists in you, as I hope, reflect before answering me; consider, on the one hand, this man whom a word from you may ruin, on the other, the justice which a word from you may enlighten. The moment is a solemn one, and

there is still time for you to retract, if you believe that you are mistaken.—Prisoner, stand up.—Brevet, look at the prisoner. Think over your past recollections, and tell us on your soul and conscience whether you still persist in recognizing this man as your old mate at the galleys, Jean Valjean.”

Brevet looked at the prisoner, and then turned to the court.

“Yes, sir, I was the first who recognized him, and I adhere to it. This man is Jean Valjean, who came to Toulon in 1796 and left in 1815. I came out a year later. He looks like a brute now, but in that case age has brutalized him, for he was cunning at the hulks. I recognize him positively.”

“Go and sit down,” said the President.—“Prisoner, remain standing.”

Chenildieu was next brought in, a convict for life, as was shown by his red jacket and green cap. He was serving his time at Toulon, whence he had been fetched for this trial. He was a little man of about fifty years of age, quick, wrinkled, thin, yellow, bold, and feverish, who had in all his limbs and his whole person a sort of sickly weakness, and immense strength in his look. His mates at the galleys had surnamed him *Jenie-Dieu*. The President addressed him much as he had done Brevet. At the moment when he reminded him that his degradation robbed him of the right of taking an oath, Chenildieu raised his head and looked boldly at the crowd. The President begged him to reflect, and asked him if he still persisted in recognizing the prisoner. Chenildieu burst into a laugh.

“I should think I do! Why, we were fastened to the same chain for five years.—So you are sulky, old fellow?”

“Go and sit down,” said the President.

The usher brought in Cochepaille. This second convict for life, who had been fetched from the galleys and was dressed in red like Chenildieu, was a peasant of Lourdes and a semi-bear of the Pyrenees. He had guarded sheep in the mountains, and had gradually slid into brigandage.

Cochepaille was no less savage, and appeared even more stupid, than the prisoner ; he was one of those wretched men whom nature has sketched as wild beasts, and whom society finishes as galley-slaves. The President tried to move him by a few grave and pathetic words, and asked him, like the two others, whether he still persisted, without any hesitation or trouble, in recognizing the man standing before him.

"It is Jean Valjean," said Cochepaille. "He was nicknamed Jean the Jack, because he was so strong."

Each of the affirmations of these three men, evidently sincere and made in good faith, had aroused in the audience a murmur of evil omen for the prisoner—a murmur which grew louder and more prolonged each time that a new declaration was added to the preceding one. The prisoner himself listened to them with that amazed face, which, according to the indictment, was his principal means of defence. At the first the gendarmes heard him grind between his teeth, "Well, there's one," after the second he said rather louder, and with an air of satisfaction, "Good !" at the third he exclaimed, "Famous !" The President addressed him,—

"You have heard the evidence, prisoner ; have you any answer to make ?"

He answered,—

"I say famous !"

A laugh broke out in the audience, and almost affected the jury. It was plain that the man was lost.

"Ushers," said the President, "produce silence in the court : I am about to sum up."

At this moment there was a movement by the President's side ; and a voice could be heard exclaiming,—

"Brevet, Chenildieu, and Cochepaille, look this way." All those who heard the voice felt chilled to the heart, for it was so lamentable and terrible. All eyes were turned in the direction whence it came : a man seated among the privileged audience behind the court had risen, pushed open the gate that separated the judge's bench from the public court, and stepped down. The President, the

public prosecutor, M. Bamatabois, twenty persons, recognized him, and exclaimed simultaneously, "Monsieur Madeleine!"

## CHAPTER XI.

## CHAMPMATHIEU IS ASTOUNDED.

It was he in truth; the clerk's lamp lit up his face; he held his hat in his hand, there was no disorder in his attire, and his coat was carefully buttoned. He was very pale, and trembled slightly. Every head was raised, the sensation was indescribable, and there was a momentary hesitation among the spectators. The voice had been so poignant, the man standing there seemed so calm, that at first they did not understand, and asked each other who it was that had spoken. They could not believe that this tranquil man could have uttered that terrific cry. This indecision lasted but a few moments. Before the President and the public prosecutor could say a word, before the gendarmes and ushers could make a move, the man, whom all still called at this moment M. Madeleine, had walked up to the witnesses Brevet, Chenildieu, and Cochepaille.

"Do you not recognize me?" he asked them.

All three stood amazed, and gave a nod to show that they did not know him, and Cochepaille, who was intimidated, gave a military salute. M. Madeleine turned to the jury and the court, and said in a gentle voice,—

"Gentlemen of the jury, acquit the prisoner.—Monsieur le President, have me arrested. The man you are seeking is not he, for I—I am Jean Valjean."

Not a breath was drawn—the first commotion of astonishment had been succeeded by a sepulchral silence; all felt that species of religious terror which seizes on a crowd when something grand is being accomplished. The President's face, however, displayed sympathy and sorrow; he exchanged a rapid look with the public prosecutor,

and a few words in a low voice with the assessors. He then turned to the spectators, and asked with an accent which all understood,—

“Is there a medical man present?”

The public prosecutor then said,—

“Gentlemen of the jury, the strange and unexpected incident which has disturbed the trial inspires us, as it does yourselves, with a feeling which we need not express. You all know, at least by reputation, the worthy M. Madeleine, Mayor of M——. If there be a medical man here, we join with the President in begging him to attend to M. Madeleine and remove him to his house.”

M. Madeleine did not allow the public prosecutor to conclude, but interrupted him with an accent full of gentleness and authority. These are the words he spoke; we produce them literally, as they were written down by one of the witnesses of this scene, and as they still live in the ears of those who heard them just forty years ago:—

“I thank you, sir, but I am not mad, as you will soon see. You were on the point of committing a great error; set that man at liberty: I am accomplishing a duty, for I am the hapless convict. I am the only man who sees clearly here, and I am telling you the truth. What I am doing at this moment God above is looking at, and that is sufficient for me. You can seize me, for here I am; and yet I did my best. I hid myself under a name, I became rich, I became Mayor, and I wished to get back among honest men, but it seems that this is impossible. There are many things I cannot tell you, as I am not going to describe my life to you, for one day it will be known. It is true that I robbed the Bishop; also true that I robbed Little Gervais, and they were right in telling you that Jean Valjean was a dangerous villain—though, perhaps, all the fault did not lie with him. Listen, gentlemen of the court. A man so debased as myself cannot remonstrate with Providence, or give advice to society, but I will say that the infamy from which I sought to emerge is an injurious thing, and the galleys make the

convict. Be good enough to bear that fact in mind. Before I went to Toulon I was a poor peasant, with but little intelligence and almost an idiot; but the galleys changed me. I was stupid, and I became wicked: I was a log, and I became a brand. At a later date indulgence and goodness saved me, in the same way as severity had destroyed me. But forgive me, you cannot understand what I am saying. At my house the two-franc piece I stole seven years ago from Little Gervais will be found among the ashes in the fireplace. I have nothing more to add, so seize me. Good Heavens! the public prosecutor shakes his head. You say M. Madeleine has gone mad, and do not believe me. This is afflicting; at least do not condemn this man. What! these three do not recognize me! Oh, I wish that Javert were here, for he would recognize me!"

No pen could render the benevolent and sombre melancholy of the accent which accompanied these words. He then turned to the three convicts.

"Well, I recognize you. Brevet, do you not remember me?" He broke off, hesitated for a moment, and said,—

"Can you call to mind the chequered braces you used to wear at the galleys?"

Brevet gave a start of surprise and looked at him from head to foot in terror. He continued,—

"Chenildieu, you have a deep burn in your right shoulder, because you placed it one day in a pan of charcoal in order to efface the three letters, T. F. P., which, however, are still visible. Answer me—is it so?"

"It is true," said Chenildieu.

"Cochepaille, you have near the hollow of your left arm a date made in blue letters with burnt gunpowder, the date is that of the Emperor's landing at Cannes, March 1, 1815. Turn up your sleeve."

Cochepaille did so, and every eye was turned to his bare arm; a gendarme brought up a lamp, and the date was there. The unhappy man turned to the audience and the judges, with a smile which to this day affects those

who saw it. It was the smile of triumph but it was also the smile of despair.

"You see plainly," he said, "that I am Jean Valjean."

In the hall there were now neither judges, accusers, nor gendarmes; there were only fixed eyes and heaving hearts. No one thought of the part he might be called on to perform—the public prosecutor that he was there to prove a charge, the President to pass sentence, and the prisoner's counsel to defend. It was a striking thing that no question was asked, no authority interfered. It is the property of sublime spectacles to seize on all minds and make spectators of all the witnesses. No one perhaps accounted for his feelings, no one said to himself that he saw a great light shining, but all felt dazzled in their hearts. It was evident that they had Jean Valjean before them. The appearance of this man had been sufficient to throw a bright light on an affair which was so obscure a moment previously; without needing any explanation, the entire crowd understood, as if through a sort of electric revelation, at once and at a glance the simple and magnificent story of a man who denounced himself in order that another man might not be condemned in his place. Details, hesitation, any possible resistance, were lost in this vast, luminous fact. It was an impression which quickly passed away, but at the moment was irresistible.

"I will not occupy the time of the court longer," Jean Valjean continued; "I shall go away, as I am not arrested, for I have several things to do. The public prosecutor knows who I am, he knows where I am going, and he will order me to be arrested when he thinks proper."

He walked towards the door, and not a voice was raised, not an arm stretched forth to prevent him. All fell back, for there was something divine in this incident which causes the multitude to recoil and make way for a single man. He slowly walked on; it was never known who opened the door, but it is certain that he found it open when he reached it. When there, he turned and said,—



"I am at your orders, sir."

Then he addressed the audience.

"I presume that all of you consider me worthy of pity? Great GOD, when I think of what I was on the point of doing, I consider myself worthy of envy. Still, I should have preferred that all this had not taken place."

He went out, and the door was closed as it had been opened, for men who do certain superior deeds are always sure of being served by some one in the crowd. Less than an hour after, the verdict of the jury acquitted Champmathieu, and Champmathieu, who was at once set at liberty, went away in stupefaction, believing all the men mad, and not at all comprehending this vision.

## BOOK VIII.

---

### CHAPTER I.

#### M. MADELEINE LOOKS AT HIS HAIR.

DAY was beginning to dawn. Fantine had passed a sleepless and feverish night, though full of bright visions, and towards morning, fell asleep. Sister Simplice, who was watching, took advantage of this slumber to go and prepare a fresh dose of bark. The worthy sister had been for some time in the surgery, stooping over her drugs and bottles, and looking carefully at them on account of the mist which dawn spreads over objects. All at once she turned her head and gave a slight shriek. M. Madeleine had entered silently, and was standing before her.

"Is it you, sir?" she exclaimed.

He answered in a low voice,—

"How is the poor creature?"

"Not so bad just at present, but she has frightened us terribly."

She explained to him what had occurred, how Fantine had been very ill the previous day, but was now better, because she believed that he had gone to Montfermeil to fetch her child. The sister did not dare question him, but she could see from his looks that he had not been there.

"All that is well," he said. "You did right in not undeceiving her."

"Yes," the sister continued, "but now that she is going to see you, sir, and does not see her child, what are we to tell her?"

He remained thoughtful for a moment.

"GOD will inspire us," he said.

"Still, it is impossible to tell a falsehood," the sister murmured in a low voice.

It was now bright day in the room, and it lit up M. Madeleine's face. The sister raised her eyes by chance.

"Good gracious, sir," she exclaimed, "what can have happened to you? Your hair is quite white."

"What!" he said.

Sister Simplice had no mirror, but she took from a drawer a small looking-glass which the infirmary doctor employed to make sure that a patient was dead. M. Madeleine took this glass, looked at his hair, and said, "So it is." He said it carelessly and as if thinking of something else, and the sister felt chilled by some unknown terror of which she caught a glimpse in all this. He asked,—

"Can I see her?"

"Will you not procure her child for her, sir?" the sister said, hardly daring to ask the question.

"Of course; but it will take at least two or three days."

"If she were not to see you till then, sir," the sister continued timidly, "she would not know that you had returned; it would be easy to keep her quiet, and when her child arrived, she would naturally think that you had returned with it. That would not be telling a falsehood."

M. Madeleine appeared to reflect for a few moments, and then said with his calm gravity,—

"No, sister, I must see her, for I am possibly pressed for time."

The nun did not seem to notice the word "possibly," which gave an obscure and singular meaning to the Mayor's remark. She answered in a low voice,—

"In that case you can go in, sir, though she is asleep."

He made a few remarks about a door that closed badly and whose creaking might awake the patient, then entered Fantine's room, went up to the bed, and opened the curtains. She was asleep; her breath issued from

her chest with that tragic sound peculiar to these diseases, which crushes poor mothers, who sit up at nights by the side of their sleeping child for whom there is no hope. But this painful breathing scarce disturbed an ineffable serenity spread over her face, which transfigured her in her sleep. Her pallor had become whiteness; her cheeks were carnations. Her long, fair eyelashes, the sole beauty that remained of her virginity and youth, quivered, though remaining closed. Her whole person trembled as if she had wings which were on the point of expanding and bearing her away. To see her thus, no one could have believed that she was in an almost hopeless state, for she resembled rather a woman who is about to fly away than one who is going to die. The branch, when the hand approaches to pluck the flowers, quivers and seems at once to retire and advance. The human body undergoes something like this quiver when the moment arrives for the mysterious fingers of death to pluck the soul.

M. Madeleine stood for some time motionless near this bed, looking first at the patient and then at the crucifix, as he had done two months previously, on the day when he came for the first time to see her in this asylum. They were both in the same attitude—she sleeping, he praying; but in those two months her hair had turned grey, and his white. The sister had not come in with him: he was standing by the bedside, finger on lip, as if there were some one in the room whom he was bidding to be silent. She opened her eyes, saw him, and said calmly and with a smile,—

“ And Cosette ? ”

## CHAPTER II.

### FANTINE IS HAPPY.

SHE gave no start of surprise, no start of joy, for she was joy itself. The simple question—“ And Cosette ? ” was

asked in such profound faith, with so much certainty, with such an utter absence of anxiety and doubt, that he could not find a word to say. She continued,—

"I knew you were there, for though I was asleep, I saw. I have seen you for a long time, and have been looking after you all night; you were in a glory, and had around you all sorts of heavenly faces."

She looked up to the crucifix.

"But," she continued, "tell me where Cosette is? Why was she not laid in my bed so that I could see her directly I woke?"

He answered something mechanically which he could never remember. Luckily the physician, who had been sent for, came to M. Madeleine's assistance.

"My dear girl," said the physician, "calm yourself, your child is here."

Fantine's eyes sparkled, and covered her whole face with brightness; she clasped her hands with an expression which contained all the violence and all the gentleness a prayer can have simultaneously.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "bring her to me!"

Touching maternal illusion! Cosette was still to her the little child who must be carried.

"Not yet," the physician continued, "not at this moment; you have a little fever hanging about you; the sight of your own child would agitate you and do you harm. You must get well first."

She impetuously interrupted him,—

"But I am well! I tell you I am well. What a donkey this doctor is! I insist on seeing my child."

"There, you see," the physician said, "how violent you are! So long as you are like that, I will prevent your having your child. It is not enough to see her, but you must live for her. When you grow reasonable, I will bring her myself."

The poor mother hung her head.

"Doctor, I ask your pardon, I sincerely ask your pardon. In former times I should not have spoken as I did just now, but I have gone through so much unhappi-

ness that I do not know at times what I am saying. I understand ; you are afraid of the excitement ; I will wait as long as you like, but I swear to you that it would not do me any harm to see my child. Is it not very natural that I should want to see my child, who has been fetched from Montfermeil expressly for me ? I am not angry, for I know very well that I am going to be happy. The whole night I have seen white things and smiling faces. The doctor will bring me Cosette when he likes ; I have no fever now, because I am cured ; I feel that there is nothing the matter with me, but I will behave as if I were ill, and not stir, so as to please these ladies. When you see that I am quite calm, you will say, We must give her her child."

M. Madeleine had seated himself in a chair by the bedside ; she turned to him, visibly making an effort to appear calm and "very good," as she said in that weakness of illness which resembles childhood, in order that, on seeing her so peaceful, there might be no difficulty in bringing Cosette to her. Still, while checking herself, she could not refrain from asking M. Madeleine a thousand questions.

"Have you had a pleasant journey, sir ? Oh, how kind it was of you to go and fetch her for me ! Only tell me how she is. Did she stand the journey well ? Alas ! she will not recognize, she will have forgotten me in all this time, poor darling. Children have no memory. They are like the birds, to-day they see one thing and another to-morrow, and do not think about anything. Had she got clean underclothing ? did those Thénardiens keep her clean ? What food did they give her ? Oh, if you only knew how I suffered when I asked myself all these questions during the period of my wretchedness ! But now it is all passed away and I am happy. Oh ! how I should like to see her ! Did you not find her very pretty, sir ? You must have been very cold in the stage-coach ? Can she not be brought here if only for a moment ? she could be taken away again directly afterwards. You could do it if you liked, as you are the Mayor."

He took her hand and said : " Cosette is lovely, she is well, you will see her soon, but calm yourself. You speak too eagerly and put your arms out of bed, which will make you cough."

In fact, a fit of coughing interrupted Fantine at nearly every word. She did not object, she feared lest she had injured the confidence she had wished to inspire, by some too impassioned entreaties, and she began talking of indifferent matters.

" Montfermeil is a rather pretty place, is it not ? In summer pleasure parties go there. Have those Thénardiens a good trade ? not many people pass through the village, and theirs is a sort of pot-house."

M. Madeleine still held her hand, and was looking at her anxiously ; it was evident that he had come to tell her something at which he now hesitated. The physician had left, and Sister Simplice alone remained near them. " I can hear her, I can hear her ! " She held out her arms to command silence, held her breath, and began listening with ravishment. A child was playing in the yard, and probably belonged to one of the workmen. It was one of those accidents which constantly occur and seem to form part of the mysterious *mise-en-scène* of mournful events. The child, a little girl, was running about to warm herself, laughing and singing loudly. Alas ! what is there in which children's games are not mingled ?

" Oh ! " Fantine continued, " 'tis my Cosette ! I recognize her voice."

The child went away again. Her voice died away. Fantine listened for some time, and then her face was clouded, and M. Madeleine could hear her murmuring, " How unkind that doctor is not to let me see my child ! That man has a bad face."

Still, her merry ideas returned to her, and she continued to talk to herself, with her head on the pillow. " How happy we are going to be ! We will have a small garden, for M. Madeleine has promised me that. My child will play in the garden. She must know her alpha-

bet by this time, and I will teach her to spell. She will chase butterflies, and I shall look at her. Then, she will take her first communion; let me see when that will be."

She began counting on her fingers,—

"One, two, three, four—she is now seven years old; in five years, then, she will wear a white open-work veil, and look like a little lady. Oh, my good sister, you cannot think how foolish I am, for I am thinking of my daughter's first communion."

And she began laughing. He had let go Fantine's hand, and listened to these words, as one listened to the sougling breeze, with his eyes fixed on the ground, and his mind plunged into unfathomable reflections. All at once she ceased speaking, and this made him raise his head mechanically. Fantine had become frightful to look at. She no longer spoke, she no longer breathed; she was half sitting up, and her thin shoulder projected from her night-gown; her face, radiant a moment previously, was hard, and she seemed to be fixing her eyes, dilated by terror, upon something formidable that stood at the other end of the room.

"Great Heaven!" he exclaimed, "what is the matter with you, Fantine?"

She did not answer, she did not remove her eyes from the object, whatever it might be, which she fancied she saw; but she touched his arm with one hand, and with the other made him a sign to look behind. He turned back and saw Javert.

---

### CHAPTER III.

#### JAVERT IS SATISFIED.

THIS is what had occurred. Half-past twelve was striking when M. Madeleine left the assize court of Arras; and he returned to the hotel just in time to start by the mail cart in which he had booked his place. A little



before 6 a.m. he reached M——, and his first care was to post the letter for M. Lafitte, and then proceed to the infirmary and see Fantine. Still, he had scarce quitted the court ere the public prosecutor, recovering from his stupor, rose on his legs, deplored the act of mania on the part of the honourable Mayor of M——, declared that his convictions were in no way modified by this strange incident, which would be cleared up at a later date, and demanded, in the interim, the conviction of this Champmathieu, evidently the true Jean Valjean. The persistency of the public prosecutor was visibly in contradiction with the feelings of all—the public, the court, and the jury. The counsel for the defence had little difficulty in refuting his arguments, and establishing that through the revelations of M. Madeleine, that is to say the real Jean Valjean, circumstances were entirely altered, and the jury had an innocent man before them. The barrister deduced a few unluckily rather stale arguments, about judicial errors, etc., the President in his summing-up supported the defence, and the jury in a few moments acquitted Champmathieu. Still, the public prosecutor wanted a Jean Valjean; and, as he no longer had Champmathieu, he took Madeleine. Immediately after Champmathieu was acquitted, he had a conference with the President as to the necessity of seizing the person of the Mayor of M——, and after the first emotion had passed, the President raised but few objections. Justice must take its course; and then, to tell the whole truth, although the President was a kind and rather sensible man, he was at the same time a very ardent Royalist, and had been offended by the way in which the Mayor of M——, in alluding to the landing at Cannes, employed the words "the Emperor" and not "Bonaparte." The order of arrest was consequently made out, and the prosecutor at once sent it off by express to M——, addressed to Inspector Javert, who, as we know, returned home immediately after he had given his evidence.

Javert was getting up at the moment when the mes-

senger handed him the order of arrest and the warrant. This messenger was himself a very skilful policeman, who informed Javert in two words of what had occurred at Arras. The order of arrest, signed by the public prosecutor, was thus conceived: "Inspector Javert will apprehend Monsieur Madeleine, Mayor of M——, who in this day's session was recognized as the liberated convict, Jean Valjean." Any one who did not know Javert and had seen him at the moment when he entered the infirmary anteroom, could not have guessed what was taking place, but would have considered him to be as usual. He was cold, calm, serious, his grey hair was smoothed down on his temples, and he went up the stairs with his usual slowness. But any one who was well acquainted with him, and examined him closely, would have shuddered; the buckle of his leathern stock, instead of sitting in the nape of his neck, was under his left ear. This revealed an extraordinary agitation. Javert was a complete character, without a crease in his duty or in his uniform: methodical with criminals, and rigid with his coat buttons. For him to have his stock out of order, it was necessary for him to be suffering from one of those emotions which might be called internal earthquakes. He had merely fetched a corporal and four men from the guard-house close by, left them in the yard, and had Fantine's room pointed out to him by the unsuspecting portress, who was accustomed to see policemen ask for the Mayor.

On reaching Fantine's door, Javert turned the key, pushed the door with the gentleness either of a sick nurse or a spy, and entered. Correctly speaking, he did not enter: he stood in the half-opened door with his hat on his head, and his left hand thrust into the breast of his greatcoat, which was buttoned to the chin. Under his elbow could be seen the leaden knob of his enormous cane, which was concealed behind his back. He remained thus for many a minute, no one perceiving his presence. All at once Fantine raised her eyes, saw him, and made M. Madeleine turn. At the moment when

Madeleine's glance met Javert's, the latter, without stirring or drawing near, became fearful. No human feeling can succeed in being so horrible as joy. It was the face of a fiend who has just found a condemned soul again. The certainty of at length holding Jean Valjean caused all he had in his soul to appear on his countenance, and the stirred-up sediment rose to the surface. The humiliation of having lost the trail for a while and having been mistaken with regard to Champmathieu was effaced by his pride at having guessed so correctly at the beginning, and having a right instinct for such a length of time. Javert's satisfaction was displayed in his sovereign attitude, and the deformity of triumph was spread over his narrow forehead.

Javert at this moment was in heaven : without distinctly comprehending the fact, but still with a confused intuition of his necessity and his success, he, Javert, personified justice, light, and truth in their celestial function of crushing evil. He had behind him, around him, at an infinite depth, authority, reason, the legal conscience, the public vindication, all the stars : he protected order, he drew the lightning from the law, he avenged society, he rendered assistance to the absolute. There was in his victory a remnant of defiance and contest : upright, haughty, and dazzling, he displayed the superhuman bestiality of a ferocious archangel in the bright azure of heaven. The formidable shadow of the deed he was doing rendered visible to his clutching fist the flashing social sword. Happy and indignant he held, beneath his heel crime, vice, perdition, rebellion, and hell : he was radiant, he exterminated, he smiled, and there was an incontestable grandeur in this monstrous St. Michael. Javert, though terrifying, was not ignoble. Probity, sincerity, candour, conviction, and the idea of duty are things which, by deceiving themselves, may become hideous, but which, even if hideous, remain grand ; their majesty, peculiar to the human conscience, persists in horror ; they are virtues which have but one vice, error. The pitiless, honest joy of a fanatic in the

midst of his atrocity retains a mournfully venerable radiance. Without suspecting it, Javert, in his formidable happiness, was worthy of pity, like every ignorant man who triumphs; nothing could be so poignant and terrible as this face, in which was displayed all that may be called the wickedness of good.

## CHAPTER IV.

## AUTHORITY RESUMES ITS RIGHTS.

FANTINE had not seen Javert since the day when the Mayor tore her out of his clutches, and her sickly brain could form no other thought but that he had come to fetch her. She could not endure his frightful face: she felt herself dying. She buried her face in her hands, and cried with agony,—

“Monsieur Madeleine, save me!”

Jean Valjean (we will not call him otherwise in future) had risen, and said to Fantine in his gentlest, calmest voice,—

“Do not be alarmed: he has not come for you.”

Then he turned to Javert and said,—

“I know what you want.”

And Javert answered,—

“Come, make haste——”

There was something savage and frenzied in the accent that accompanied these words: no orthographer could write it down, for it was no longer human speech, but a roar. He did not behave as usual, he did not enter into the matter or display his warrant. To him Jean Valjean was a sort of mysterious combatant, a dark wrestler with whom he had been struggling for five years, and had been unable to throw him. This arrest was not a beginning but an end, and he confined himself to saying, “Come, make haste.” While speaking thus, he did not advance: he merely darted at Jean Valjean the look which he threw out as a grapple, and with which he

violently drew wretches to him. It was this look which Fantine had felt pierce to her marrow two months before. On hearing Javert's roar, Fantine opened her eyes again ; but the Mayor was present, so what had she to fear ? Javert walked into the middle of the room, and cried,—

" Well, are you coming ? "

The unhappy girl looked around her. No one was present but the nun and the Mayor ; to whom, then, could this humiliating remark be addressed ? only to herself. She shuddered. Then she saw an extraordinary thing, so extraordinary that nothing like it had ever appeared in the darkest delirium of fever. She saw the policeman Javert seize the Mayor by the collar, and she saw the Mayor bow his head. It seemed to her as if the end of the world had arrived.

" Monsieur le Maire ! " Fantine screamed.

Javert burst into a laugh, that frightful laugh which showed all his teeth.

" There is no Monsieur le Maire here."

Jean Valjean did not attempt to remove the hand that grasped his collar ; he said,—

" Javert——"

Javert interrupted him : " Call me Monsieur the Inspector."

" I should like to say a word to you in private, sir," Jean Valjean continued.

" Speak up," Javert answered, " people talk aloud to me."

Jean Valjean went on in a low voice,—

" It is a request I have to make of you."

" I tell you to speak up."

" But it must only be heard by yourself——"

" What do I care for that ? I am not listening ! "

Jean Valjean turned to him and said rapidly, and in a very low voice,—

" Grant me three days ! three days to go and fetch this unhappy woman's child ! I will pay whatever you ask, and you can accompany me if you like."

" You must be joking," Javert cried. " Why, I did

not think you such a fool ! You ask three days of me that you may bolt ! You say that it is to fetch this girl's brat ! ah, ah, that is rich, very rich."

Fantine had a tremor.

"My child," she exclaimed, "to go and fetch my child ? Then she is not here?—Sister, answer me—where is Cosette ? I want my child !—Monsieur Madeleine, M. le Maire !"

Javert stamped his foot.

"There's the other beginning now ; will you be quiet, wench ? A devil's own country, where galley-slaves are magistrates, and street-walkers are nursed like countesses. Well, well, it will be altered now, and it's time for it."

He looked fixedly at Fantine, and added, as he took a fresh hold of Jean Valjean's cravat, shirt, and coat collar,—

"I tell you there is no M. Madeleine and no Monsieur le Maire, but there is a robber, a brigand, a convict of the name of Jean Valjean, and I've got him—that's what there is."

Fantine rose, supporting herself on her stiffened arms and hands ; she looked at Jean Valjean ; she looked at Javert ; she looked at the nun ; she opened her mouth as if to speak, but there was a rattle in her throat, her teeth chattered, she stretched out her arms, convulsively opening her hands, clutching like a drowning man, and then suddenly fell back on the pillow. Her head struck against the bed head, and fell back on her breast with gaping mouth and open eyes—she was dead. Jean Valjean laid his hand on that one of Javert's which held him, opened it as if it had been a child's hand, and then said to Javert,—

"You have killed this woman."

"Enough of this," Javert shouted furiously. "I am not here to listen to abuse, so you can save your breath. There is a guard down below, so come quickly, or I shall handcuff you."

There was in the corner of the room an old iron bedstead in a bad condition, which the sisters used as a sofa when they were sitting up at night. Jean Valjean went

to this bed, tore off in a twinkling the head piece, an easy thing for muscles like his, seized the supporting bar, and looked at Javert. Javert recoiled to the door. Jean Valjean, with the iron bar in his hand, walked slowly up to Fantine's bed; when he reached it, he turned and said to Javert in a scarcely audible voice,—

“I would advise you not to disturb me just at present.”

One thing is certain—Javert trembled. He thought of going to fetch the guard, but Jean Valjean might take advantage of the moment to escape. He therefore remained, clutched his stick by the small end, and leaned against the door-post, without taking his eyes off Jean Valjean. The latter rested his elbows on the bedstead, and his forehead on his hand, and began contemplating Fantine, who lay motionless before him. He remained thus, absorbed, and silent, and evidently not thinking of anything else in the world. On his face and in his attitude there was only an indescribable pity. After a few minutes passed in this reverie, he stooped over Fantine and spoke to her in a low voice. What did he say to her? what could this outcast man say to this dead woman? No one on earth heard the words, but did that dead woman hear them? There are touching illusions, which are perhaps sublime realities. One thing is indubitable, that Sister Simplice, the sole witness of what took place, has frequently declared that at the moment when Jean Valjean whispered in Fantine's ear, she distinctly saw an ineffable smile playing round her pale lips and in her vague eyes, which were full of the amazement of the tomb. Jean Valjean took Fantine's head in his hands, and laid it on the pillow, as a mother might have done to a child. Then he tied the strings of her night-gown, and thrust her hair under her cap. When this was done, he closed her eyes. Fantine's face at this moment seemed strangely illumined, for death is the entrance into brilliant light. Fantine's hand was hanging out of bed; Jean Valjean knelt down by this hand, gently raised and kissed it. Then he rose and turned to Javert,—

“Now I am at your service.”

## CHAPTER V.

## A VERY PROPER TOMB.

JAVERT placed Jean Valjean in the town gaol. The arrest of M. Madeleine produced an extraordinary commotion in M——, but it is sad to have to say that nearly everybody abandoned him on hearing that he was a galley-slave. In less than two hours all the good he had done was forgotten, and he was only a galley-slave. It is but fair to say, though, that they did not yet know the details of the affair at Arras. The whole day through, conversations like the following could be heard in all parts of the town :—

“Don’t you know? he is a liberated convict.—Who is?—The Mayor.—Nonsense. M. Madeleine?—Yes.—Really?—His name is not Madeleine, but some hideous thing like Bejean, Bojean, Boujean.—Oh my goodness—he has been arrested, and will remain in the town gaol till he is removed.—Removed! where to?—He will be tried at the assizes for a highway robbery which he formerly committed.—Well, do you know, I always suspected that man, for he was too kind, too perfect, too devout. He refused the cross, and gave half-pence to all the little scamps he met. I always thought that there was some black story behind.”

The “drawing-rooms” greatly improved the occasion. An old lady, who subscribed to the *Drapeau Blanc*, made this remark, whose depth it is almost impossible to fathom:

“Well, I do not feel sorry at it, for it will be a lesson to the Bonapartists.”

It is thus that the phantom which called itself M. Madeleine faded away at M——; only three or four persons in the whole town remained faithful to his memory, and his old servant was one of them. On the evening of the same day this worthy old woman was sitting in her lodge, still greatly startled and indulging in sad thoughts. The factory had been closed all day, the gates were bolted, and



the street was deserted. There was no one in the house but the two nuns, who were watching by Fantine's body. Toward the hour when M. Madeleine was wont to come in, the worthy portress rose mechanically, took the key of M. Madeleine's bedroom from a drawer, and the candlestick which he used at night to go upstairs; then she hung the key on the nail from which he usually took it, and placed the candlestick by its side, as if she expected him. Then she sat down again and began thinking. The poor old woman had done all this unconsciously. She did not break off her reverie for two or three hours, and then exclaimed: "Only think of that! I have hung his key on the nail!"

At this moment the window of the lodge was opened, a hand was passed through the opening, which seized the key and lit the candle by hers. The portress raised her eyes, and stood with gaping mouth, but she repressed the cry which was in her throat; for she recognized this hand, this arm, this coat-sleeve, as belonging to M. Madeleine. It was some minutes ere she could speak, for she "was struck," as she said afterwards when describing the adventure.

"Good gracious, M. le Maire," she at length exclaimed, "I fancied——"

She stopped, for the end of the sentence would have been disrespectful to the first part. Jean Valjean was still Monsieur le Maire with her. He completed her thought.

"That I was in prison?" he said. "I was so, but I pulled out a bar, leapt out, and here I am. I am going up to my room; go and fetch Sister Simplice, who doubtless is by the side of that poor woman."

The old servant hastened to obey; he said nothing further to her, for he was quite sure that she would guard him better than he could himself. It was never known how he managed to get into the yard without having the gate opened. He always carried about him a master key, which opened a little side door, but he must have been searched and this key taken from him. This point was not cleared up. He went up the stairs that led to his room, and on reaching the landing, left the candle on the

top stair, closed his window and shutters, and then entered the room with the candle. This precaution was useful, for it will be remembered that his window could be noticed from the street. He took a glance around him, at his table, his chair, his bed, which had not been slept in for three nights. No trace of that night's disorder remained, for the portress "had done his room;" but she had picked out of the ashes and laid neatly on the table the two iron ends of the stick and the forty-sous piece, which was blackened by the fire. He took a sheet of paper, on which he wrote, "This is the two-franc piece stolen from Little Gervais to which I alluded in court," and he laid the coin on the paper, so that it should be the first thing seen on entering the room. He took from a drawer an old shirt which he tore up, and wrapped the two candlesticks in the rags. Still, he displayed no haste or agitation, and while wrapping up the candlesticks he ate a piece of black bread—probably the prison bread which he took with him on his escape. This fact was proved by the crumbs found on the boards when the authorities made an investigation at a later date. There were two gentle taps at the door.

"Come in," he said.

It was Sister Simplicie; she was pale, her eyes were red, and the candle she held shook in her hand. Violent events of destiny have this peculiarity, that however perfect or cold we may be, they draw human nature out of our entrails and compel it to reappear on the surface. In the emotions of this day the nun had become a woman again; she had wept and was trembling. Jean Valjean had just finished writing some lines on a piece of paper, which he handed to the sister, with the remark, "Sister, you will deliver this to the Curé?"

As the paper was open, she turned her eyes on it. "You may read it," he said.

She read, "I request the Curé to take charge of all that I leave here. He will be good enough to defray out of it the costs of my trial and the interment of the woman who died this morning. The rest will be for the poor."

The sister attempted to speak, but could only produce a few inarticulate sounds: at length she managed to say,—

“Do you not wish to see the poor unhappy girl for the last time, sir?”

“No,” he said, “I am pursued, and if I were to be arrested in her room it would disturb her.”

He had scarce said this, ere a great noise broke out on the staircase: they heard a tumult of ascending steps, and the old servant cry in her loudest and most piercing voice,—

“My good sir, I can take my oath that no one has come in here all day or all the evening, and I have not left my lodge once.”

A man answered,—

“But there is a light in that room.”

They recognized Javert's voice. The room was so built that the door, on being thrown open, concealed a nook in the right-hand wall: Jean Valjean blew out the light and crept into the nook. Sister Simplicie fell on her knees by the table, as the door opened and Javert entered. The voices of several men and the protestations of the old portress could be heard. The nun did not raise her eyes; she was praying. Her candle was on the chimney and gave but little light, and on noticing the nun, Javert halted in great confusion. It will be remembered that the very basis of Javert, his element, the air he breathed, was reverence for all authority: he was all of one piece, and allowed no objection or limitation. With him, of course, ecclesiastical authority was the highest of all: he was religious, superficial, and correct on this point as on all. In his eyes, a priest was a spirit that does not deceive, a nun a creature who does not sin. Theirs were souls walled up against the world with only one door, which never opened except to let truth pass out. On noticing the sister, his first movement was to withdraw, but he had another duty too, which imperiously urged him in an opposite direction. His second impulse was to remain, and at least venture one question. It was that

Sister Simplice who had never told a falsehood in her life : Javert was aware of this, and especially revered her for it.

" Sister," he asked, " are you alone in the room ? "

There was a terrible moment, during which the old servant felt as if she were going to faint : the sister raised her eyes and said, " Yes."

" In that case," Javert continued, " I beg your pardon for pressing you, but it is my duty—you have not seen this evening a person, a man who has escaped and we are seeking—that fellow of the name of Jean Valjean. Have you seen him ? "

The sister answered, " No."

She had told two falsehoods one upon the other, without hesitation, rapidly, as if devoting herself.

" I beg your pardon," said Javert ; and he withdrew with a deep bow.

Oh, holy woman, it is many years since you were on this earth ; you have rejoined in the light your sisters the virgins and your brothers the angels ; may this falsehood be placed to your credit in Paradise !

The sister's assertion was so decisive for Javert, that he did not notice the singular fact of the candle just blown out and which was still smoking on the table. An hour later a man, making his way through the fog, was hurrying away from M—— in the direction of Paris. This man was Jean Valjean ; and it was proved, by the testimony of two or three carriers who met him, that he was carrying a bundle and was dressed in a blouse. Where did he procure this blouse from ? It was never known ; but a few days before, an old workman had died in the infirmary of the sailors, only leaving a blouse. It might have been that one.

One last word about Fantine. We have all one mother, the earth, and Fantine was given back to that mother. The Curé thought he was doing his duty, and perhaps did it, and keeping as much money as he possibly could out of what Jean Valjean left him for the poor. After all, who were the people interested ?—a convict and a street-walker : hence he simplified Fantine's interment, and

reduced it to what is called the "public grave." Fantine was therefore interred in the gratis corner of the cemetery, which belongs to everybody and to nobody, and where the poor are lost. Fortunately GOD knows where to look for a soul. Fantine was laid in the darkness among a pile of promiscuous bones in the public grave. Her tomb was like her bed.

## PART II.—COSETTE.



## BOOK I.

---

### CHAPTER I.

#### ON THE NIVELLES ROAD.

ON a fine May morning last year (1861), a wayfarer, the person who is telling this story, was coming from Nivelles, and was proceeding towards La Hulpe. He was on foot. He was pursuing\* a broad paved road, which undulated between two rows of trees, over the hills which succeed each other, raise the road and let it fall again, and produce something in the nature of enormous waves.

He had passed Lillois and Bois-Seigneur-Isaac. In the west he noticed the slate-roofed tower of Braine-l'Alleud, which looked like a reversed vase. He had just left behind a wood upon an eminence ; and at the angle of the cross-road, by the side of a sort of worm-eaten gibbet bearing the inscription *Ancient Barrier No. 4*, a wine-house, bearing on its front this sign : *At the Four Winds. Échabeau, Private Café.*

About half a mile further on, he arrived at the bottom of a little valley, where there is water which passes beneath an arch formed in the causeway. The clump of sparsely planted but very green trees, which fills the valley on one side of the road, is dispersed over the meadows on the other, and disappears gracefully and as in disorder in the direction of Braine-l'Alleud.



On the right, skirting the road, were an inn, with a four-wheeled cart at the door, a large bundle of hop-poles, a plough, a heap of dried brushwood near a flourishing hedge, lime smoking in a square hole, and a ladder suspended along an old penthouse with straw partitions. A young girl was hoeing in a field, where a huge yellow poster, probably of some outside spectacle, such as a parish *fête*, was fluttering in the wind. At one corner of the inn, beside a pool in which a flotilla of ducks was navigating, a badly paved path plunged into the bushes. The wayfarer struck into this.

After proceeding about a hundred yards, skirting a wall of the fifteenth century, surmounted by a pointed gable, with bricks set in contrast, he found himself before a large arched stone gate, with a rectilinear impost, in the sombre style of Louis XIV., flanked by two flat medallions. A severe façade rose above this gate; a wall, perpendicular to the façade, almost touched the gate, and flanked it with an abrupt right angle. In the meadow before the gate lay three harrows, through which, in disorder, grew all the flowers of May. The gate was closed. The two decrepit leaves which barred it were ornamented with an old rusty knocker.

The sun was delightful; the branches had that soft rustling of May, which seems to proceed rather from the nests than from the wind. A brave little bird, probably in love, was carolling lustily in a large tree.

The wayfarer bent over and examined a rather large circular excavation, resembling the hollow of a sphere, in the stone on the left, at the right of the gate.

At this moment the gate opened, and a peasant woman emerged.

She saw the wayfarer, and perceived what he was looking at.

"It was a French cannon-ball which made that," she said to him. And she added:—

"That which you see there, higher up in the gate, near a nail, is the hole of the big iron bullet as large as an egg. The bullet did not pierce the wood."

"What is the name of this place?" inquired the wayfarer.

"Hougomont," said the woman.

The traveller straightened himself up. He walked on a few paces, and then looked over the hedges. On the horizon, through the trees, he perceived a sort of little elevation, and on this elevation something which at that distance resembled a lion.

He was on the battle-field of Waterloo.

## CHAPTER II.

### HOUGOMONT.

HOUGOMONT was a sombre spot, the beginning of the obstacle, the first resistance, which that great woodman of Europe, called Napoleon, encountered at Waterloo, the first knot under the blows of his axe.

It was a château; now it is only a farm. For the antiquary, Hougomont is *Hugomons*. This manor was built by Hugo, Sire of Somerel, the same who endowed the sixth chaplaincy of the Abbey of Villiers.

The wayfarer pushed open the door, elbowed an ancient calash under the porch, and entered the courtyard.

The first thing which struck him in this paddock was a door of the sixteenth century, which here simulates an arcade, everything else having fallen prostrate around it. A monumental aspect often comes from ruins. In a wall near the arcade opens another arched door, of the time of Henry IV., permitting a glimpse of the trees of an orchard; beside this door, a dunghill, some pickaxes, some shovels, some carts, an old well, with its flagstone and its iron reel, a chicken jumping, and a turkey spreading its tail, a chapel surmounted by a small bell-tower, a blossoming pear-tree trained in espalier along the chapel wall—such is the court, the conquest of which was one of Napoleon's dreams. This corner of earth, could he

but have seized it, would, perhaps, have given him the world. Chickens are scattering the dust about with their beaks. A growl is audible ; it is a huge dog, who shows his teeth and replaces the English.

The English behaved admirably. Cooke's four companies of guards there held out for seven hours against the attacks of an army.

Hougomont seen on a map, as a geometrical plan, comprising buildings and enclosures, presents a sort of irregular rectangle, one angle of which is nicked out. It is this angle which contains the southern door, guarded by this wall, which commands it only a gun's length away. Hougomont has two doors,—the southern door, that of the *château* ; and the northern door, belonging to the farm. Napoleon sent his brother Jérôme against Hougomont ; the divisions of Foy, Guillemillot, and Bachelu hurled themselves against it ; nearly the entire corps of Reille was employed against it, and miscarried ; Kellermann's balls were exhausted on this heroic section of wall. Bauduin's brigade was not strong enough to force Hougomont on the north, and the brigade of Soye could not do more than effect the beginning of a breach on the south, but without taking it.

The farm buildings border the courtyard on the south, and a piece of the north door, broken by the French, hangs from the wall. It consists of four planks nailed to two cross-beams, on which the scars of the attack are still distinguishable.

The northern door, which was beaten in by the French, and which has had a piece applied to it, to replace the panel suspended on the wall, stands half-open at the bottom of the paddock ; it is cut squarely in the wall, built of stone below, of brick above, which closes in the courtyard on the north. It is a simple door for carts, such as exist in all farms, with the two large leaves made of rustic planks : beyond lie the meadows. The dispute for this entrance was furious. For a long time, all sorts of marks of bloody hands were visible on the door-posts. It was there that Bauduin was killed.

The storm of the combat still lingers in this courtyard ; horror is visible here ; the incidents of the fray were petrified there ; it lives and it dies there ; it was only yesterday. The walls are in the death agony, the stones fall ; the breaches cry aloud ; the holes are wounds ; the bent and quivering trees seem to be making an effort to fly.

This courtyard was more built up in 1815 than it is now. Buildings which have since been pulled down, then formed redans and angles.

The English barricaded themselves in it ; the French made their way in, but could not stand their ground. Beside the chapel, one wing of the château, the only ruin now remaining of the manor of Hougomont, rises in a crumbling state,—gutted, one might say. The château served for a keep, the chapel for a block-house. There men exterminated each other. The French, fired on from every point,—from behind the walls, from the summits of the garrets, from the depths of the cellars, through all the casements, through all the air-holes, through every crack in the stones,—fetched fagots and set fire to walls and men ; the reply to the grape-shot was a conflagration.

In the ruined wing, through windows garnished with iron bars, the dismantled rooms of the main building of brick are visible ; the English guards were in ambush in these rooms ; the spiral of the staircase, cracked from the ground floor to the very roof, appears like the inside of a broken shell. The staircase has two stories ; the English, besieged on the staircase, and massed on its upper steps, had cut off the lower steps. These consisted of large slabs of blue stone, which form a heap among the nettles. Half a score of steps still cling to the wall ; on the first is cut the figure of a trident. These inaccessible steps are solid in their niches. All the rest resemble a jaw which has been denuded of its teeth. There are two old trees there : one is dead ; the other is wounded at its base, and grows green again in April. Since 1815 it has taken to growing through the staircase.

Men massacred each other in the chapel. The interior, which has recovered its calm, is strange. Mass has not been said there since the carnage. Nevertheless, the altar has been left there—an altar of coarse wood, placed against a background of rough-hewn stone. Four white-washed walls, a door opposite the altar, two small arched windows; over the door a large wooden crucifix, below the crucifix a square air-hole stopped up with hay; on the ground, in one corner, an old window-frame with the glass all broken to pieces—such is the chapel. Near the altar there is a wooden statue of Saint Anne, of the fifteenth century; the head of the infant Jesus has been carried off by a shot. The French, who were masters of the chapel and then dislodged, set fire to it. The flames filled this building; it was a perfect furnace; the door was burned, the floor was burned, the wooden Christ was not burned. The fire preyed upon his feet, of which only the blackened stumps are now to be seen; then it stopped,—a miracle, according to the people of the neighbourhood.

The walls are covered with inscriptions. Near the feet of Christ this name is to be read: *Henquinez*. Then these others: *Conde de Rio Maior Marques y Marquesa de Almagro (Habana)*. There are French names with exclamation points,—a sign of anger. The wall was freshly whitewashed in 1849. The nations insulted each other there.

It was at the door of this chapel that the corpse was picked up holding an axe in its hand; this corpse was Sub-Lieutenant Legros.

On emerging from the chapel, a well is visible on the left. There are two in this courtyard. One inquires, Why is there no bucket and windlass? It is because water is no longer drawn there. Why is water not drawn there? Because it is full of skeletons.

The last person who drew water from the well was named Guillaume van Kylsom. He was a peasant who lived at Hougomont, and was gardener there. On the 18th of June, 1815, his family fled and hid themselves in the woods.

The forest round about the Abbey of Villiers sheltered these unfortunate people who had been scattered abroad, for many days and nights. There are at this day certain traces recognizable, such as old trunks of burned trees, which mark the site of these poor bivouacs trembling in the depths of the thickets.

Guillaume van Kysom remained at Hougomont, "to take care of the château," and concealed himself in the cellar. The English discovered him there. They dragged him from his hiding-place, and the combatants forced, with the flats of their swords, this frightened man to serve them by administering blows. They were thirsty, and Guillaume brought them water. It was from this well that he drew it. Many drank there their last draught. This well where drank so many of the dead was destined to die itself.

After the action, they were in a hurry to bury the dead. Death has a fashion of harassing victory, and she causes the pest to follow glory. Typhus is a concomitant of triumph. This well was deep, and it was turned into a tomb. Three hundred dead bodies were cast into it. With too much haste perhaps. Were they all dead? Legend says no. It seems that on the night succeeding the interment, feeble voices were heard calling from the well.

This well is isolated in the centre of the courtyard. Three walls, part stone, part brick, and simulating a small, square tower, and folded like the leaves of a screen, surround it on all sides. The fourth side is open. It is there that the water was drawn. The wall at the bottom has a sort of shapeless loophole, possibly the hole made by a shell. This little tower had a platform, of which only the beams remain. The iron supports of the well on the right form a cross. You bend down, and the eye is lost in a deep cylinder of brick which is filled with a heaped-up mass of shadows. The base of the walls all about the well is concealed by nettles.

This well has not in front of it that large blue slab which forms the table for all wells in Belgium. The slab

has here been replaced by a cross-beam, against which lean five or six shapeless fragments of knotty and petrified wood which resemble huge bones. There is no longer either pail, chain, or windlass ; but there is still the stone basin which served the overflow. The rain-water collects, and from time to time a bird of the neighbouring forests comes thither to drink, and then flies away. One house in this ruin, the farmhouse, is still inhabited. The door of this house opens on the courtyard. Upon this door, beside a pretty Gothic lock-plate, there is an iron handle with trefoils placed slanting. At the moment when the Hanoverian lieutenant, Wilda, grasped this handle in order to take refuge in the farm, 'a French sapper cut off his hand with the blow of an axe.

The family who occupy the house had for their grandfather Guillaume van Kysom, the old gardener, dead long since. A grey-headed woman said to us : " I was there. I was three years old. My sister, who was older, was terrified and wept. They carried us off to the woods. I went there in my mother's arms. We glued our ears to the earth to hear. I imitated the cannon, and went '*Boom ! Boom !*' "

A door opening from the courtyard on the left led into the orchard, so we were told. The orchard is terrible.

It is in three parts ; one might almost say, in three acts. The first part is a garden, the second is an orchard, the third is a wood. These three parts have a common enclosure : near the entrance, the buildings of the château and the farm ; on the left, a hedge ; on the right, a wall ; and at the end, a wall. The wall on the right is of brick, the wall at the bottom is of stone. Let us enter the garden first. It slopes downwards, is planted with gooseberry bushes, choked with a growth of vegetation, and terminated by a monumental terrace of cut stone. The balustrade has a double curve.

It was a seignorial garden in the first French style which preceded Le Nôtre. Now it is ruins and briars. The pilasters are surmounted by globes which resemble

cannon-balls of stone. Forty-three balusters 'can still be counted on their sockets ; the rest lie prostrate in the grass. Almost all bear scratches of bullets. One broken baluster is placed on the stem like a fractured leg.

It was in this garden, further down than the orchard, that six light-infantry men of the 1st, having made their way thither, and being unable to escape, hunted down and caught like bears in their dens, accepted the combat with two Hanoverian companies, one of which was armed with carbines. The Hanoverians lined this balustrade and fired down. The infantry men, replying from below, six against two hundred, intrepid and with no shelter save the currant bushes, took a quarter of an hour to die.

You climb a few steps and pass from the garden into the orchard, properly speaking. There, within the limits of those few square fathoms, fifteen hundred men fell in less than an hour. The wall seems ready to renew the combat. Thirty-eight loopholes, pierced by the English at irregular heights, are there still. In front of the sixth are placed two English tombs of granite. There are loopholes only in the south wall, as the principal attack came from that quarter. The wall is hidden on the outside by a tall hedge ; the French came up, thinking that they had to deal only with a hedge, crossed it, and found the wall both an obstacle and an ambushade, with the English Guards behind it, the thirty-eight loopholes firing at once a shower of grape-shot and balls, and Soye's brigade was broken against it. Waterloo began thus.

Nevertheless, the orchard was taken. As they had no ladders, the French scaled it with their nails. They fought hand to hand amid the trees, and the grass was soaked in blood. A battalion of Nassau, seven hundred strong, was overwhelmed there. The outside of the wall, against which Kellermann's two batteries were trained, is gnawed by grape-shot.

This orchard is sentient, like others, in the month of May. It has its buttercups and its daisies ; the grass is tall there ; the cart-horses browse there ; hair ropes,



on which linen is drying, traverse the spaces between the trees and force the passer-by to bend his head ; one walks over this uncultivated land, and one's foot dives into mole-holes. In the middle of the grass one observes an uprooted tree-bole which lies there all verdant. Major Blackmann leaned against it to die. Beneath a great tree in the neighbourhood fell the German general, Duplat, descended from a French family which fled on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. An aged and falling apple-tree leans far over to one side, its wound dressed with a bandage of straw and of clayey loam. Nearly all the apple-trees are falling with age. There is not one which has not had its bullet or its cannon-ball. The skeletons of dead trees abound in this orchard. Crows fly through their branches, and at the end of it is a wood full of violets.

Bauduin killed, Foy wounded, arson, massacre, carnage, a rivulet formed of English, French, and German blood mingled in fury, a well crammed with corpses, the regiment of Nassau and the regiment of Brunswick destroyed, Duplat killed, Blackmann killed, the English Guards mutilated, twenty French battalions, besides the forty from Reille's corps, decimated, three thousand men in that hovel of Hougomont alone, sabred, gashed, butchered, shot, and burned,—and all this so that a peasant can say to-day to the traveller : *Monsieur, give me three francs, and I will tell you about the battle of Waterloo.*

### CHAPTER III.

JUNE 18, 1815.

LET us go back,—that is one of the story-teller's privileges,—and put ourselves once more in the year 1815, and even a little prior to the period when the action narrated in the first part of this book took place.

If it had not rained in the night between the 17th and

the 18th of June, 1815, the fate of Europe would have been different. A few drops of water, more or less, made Napoleon waver. All that Providence required in order to make Waterloo the end of Austerlitz was a little more rain, and a cloud crossing the sky out of season sufficed to overthrow the world.

The battle of Waterloo could not be begun until half-past eleven o'clock, and that gave Blücher time to come up. Why? Because the ground was moist. The artillery had to wait until it became a little firmer before they could manœuvre.

Napoleon was an artillery officer, and felt the effects of one. All his plans of battle were arranged for projectiles. The key to his victory was to make the artillery converge on one point. He treated the strategy of the hostile general like a citadel, and made a breach in it. He crushed the weak point with grape-shot; he joined and dissolved battles with artillery. There was something of the sharpshooter in his genius. To beat in squares, to pulverize regiments, to break lines, to destroy and disperse masses,—for him everything lay in this, to strike, strike, strike incessantly,—and he entrusted this task to the cannon-ball. It was a formidable method, and one which, united with genius, rendered this gloomy athlete of the pugilism of war invincible for the space of fifteen years.

On the 18th of June, 1815, he relied all the more on his artillery, because he had numbers on his side. Wellington had only one hundred and fifty-nine guns; Napoleon had two hundred and forty.

Suppose the soil dry, and the artillery capable of moving, the action would have begun at six o'clock in the morning. The battle would have been won and ended at two o'clock, three hours before the change of fortune in favour of the Prussians. How much blame attaches to Napoleon for the loss of this battle? Is the shipwreck due to the pilot?

Was it the evident physical decline of Napoleon that complicated this epoch by an inward diminution of

force? Had the twenty years of war worn out the blade as it had worn the scabbard, the soul as well as the body? Did the veteran make himself disastrously felt in the leader? In a word, was this genius, as many historians of note have thought, eclipsed? Did he go into a frenzy in order to disguise his weakened powers from himself? Did he begin to waver under the delusion of a breath of adventure? Had he become—a grave matter in a general—unconscious of peril? Is there an age, in this class of material great men, who may be called the giants of action, when genius becomes short-sighted? Old age has no hold on ideal genius; for the Dantes and Michael Angelos to grow old is to grow in greatness; is it declension for the Hannibals and the Bonapartes? Had Napoleon lost the direct sense of victory? Had he reached the point where he could no longer recognize the rock, could no longer divine the snare, no longer discern the crumbling edge of abyss? Had he lost his power of scenting out catastrophes? He who had in former days known all the roads to victory, and who, from the summit of his chariot of lightning, pointed them out with a sovereign finger, had he now reached that state of sinister amazement when he could lead his tumultuous legions harnessed to it, to the precipice? Was he seized at the age of forty-six with a supreme madness? Was that titanic charioteer of destiny now only a Phaëton?

We do not believe it.

His plan of battle was, by the confession of all, a masterpiece. To go straight to the centre of the Allies' line, to make a breach in the enemy, to cut them in two, to drive the British half back on Halle, and the Prussian half on Tingles, to make two shattered fragments of Wellington and Blücher, to carry Mont-Saint-Jean, to seize Brussels, to hurl the German into the Rhine, and the Englishman into the sea. All this was contained in that battle, for Napoleon. Afterwards people would see.

Of course, we do not here pretend to furnish a history

of the battle of Waterloo; one of the scenes of the foundation of the drama which we are relating is connected with this battle, but this history is not our subject; this history, moreover, has been finished, and finished in a masterly manner, from one point of view by Napoleon, from another by Charras.

For our part, we leave the historians to contend; we are but a distant witness, a passer-by along the plain, a seeker bending over that soil all made of human flesh, perhaps taking appearances for realities; we have no right to oppose, in the name of science, a collection of facts which contain illusions, no doubt; we possess neither military practice nor strategic ability which authorize a system; in our opinion, a chain of accidents dominated the two captains at Waterloo; and when it becomes a question of destiny, that mysterious culprit, we judge like the people.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A.

THOSE who wish to gain a clear idea of the battle of Waterloo have only to place, mentally, on the ground, a capital A. The left leg of the A is the road to Nivelles, the right one is the road to Genappe, the tie of the A is the hollow road to Ohain from Braine-l'Alleud. The top of the A is Mont-Saint-Jean, where Wellington is; the lower left tip is Hougomont, where Reille is stationed with Jérôme Bonaparte; the right tip is the Belle-Alliance, where Napoleon is. At the centre of this point is the precise point where the final word of the battle was pronounced. It was there that the lion has been placed, the involuntary symbol of the supreme heroism of the Imperial Guard.

The triangle comprised in the top of the A, between the two limbs and the tie, is the plateau of Mont-Saint-

Jean. The dispute over this plateau was the whole battle. The wings of the two armies extended to the right and left of the two roads to Genappe and Nivelles ; d'Erlon facing Picton, Reille facing Hill.

Behind the point of the A, behind the plateau of Mont-Saint-Jean, is the forest of Soignes.

As for the plain itself, imagine a vast undulating sweep of ground ; each ascent commands the next rise, and all the undulations mount towards Mont-Saint-Jean, and there end in the forest.

Two hostile troops on a field of battle are two wrestlers. It is a question of seizing the opponent round the waist. The one tries to throw the other. They cling at everything ; a bush is a point of support ; an angle of the wall offers them a rest to the shoulder ; for the lack of a hovel under whose cover they can draw up, a regiment yields its ground ; an unevenness in the ground, a chance turn in the landscape, a cross-path encountered at the right moment, a grove, a ravine, can stay the heel of that colossus which is called an army, and prevent its retreat. He who leaves the field is beaten ; hence the necessity devolving on the responsible leader of examining the smallest clump of trees and of studying deeply the slightest rise in the ground.

The two generals had attentively studied the plain of Mont-Saint-Jean, which is known as the plain of Waterloo. In the preceding year, Wellington, with the sagacity of foresight, had examined it as the future seat of a great battle. Upon this spot, and for this duel, on the 18th of June, Wellington had the good post, Napoleon the bad post. The English army was above, the French army below.

It is almost superfluous here to sketch the appearance of Napoleon on horseback, telescope in hand, upon the heights of Rossomme, at daybreak, on June 18, 1815. All the world has seen him before we can show him. The calm profile under the little three-cornered hat of the school of Brienne, the green uniform, the white facings concealing the star of the Legion of Honour, his

great coat hiding his epaulets, the corner of red ribbon peeping from beneath his vest, his leather breeches, the white horse with the saddle-cloth of purple velvet bearing on the corners crowned N's and eagles, Hessian boots over silk stockings, silver spurs, the sword of Marengo,—that whole appearance of the last of the Cæsars is present to all imaginations, saluted with acciamations by some, severely regarded by others.

That figure stood for a long time wholly in the light ; this arose from a certain legendary dinness evolved by the majority of heroes, and which always veils the truth for a longer or shorter time ; but to-day history and daylight have arrived.

That illumination called history is pitiless ; it possesses this peculiar and divine quality, that, pure light as it is, and precisely because it is wholly light, it often casts a shadow in places that had been luminous ; from the same man it constructs two different phantoms, and the one attacks the other and executes justice on it, and the shadows of the despot contend with the brilliancy of the leader. Hence arises a truer measure in the definitive judgments of nations. Babylon violated diminishes Alexander, Rome enchained diminishes Cæsar, Jerusalem murdered diminishes Titus. Tyranny follows the tyrant. It is a misfortune for a man to leave behind him the night which bears his form.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE QUID OBSCURUM OF BATTLES.

ALL the world knows the first phase of this battle ; an opening which was troubled, uncertain, hesitating, menacing to both armies, but still more so for the English than for the French.

It had rained all night, the ground was saturated, the water had accumulated here and there in the hollows

of the plain as if in tubs ; at some points the gear of the artillery carriages was buried up to the axles, the circingles of the horses were dripping with liquid mud. If the wheat and rye trampled down by this cohort of transports on the march had not filled in the ruts and strewn a litter beneath the wheels, all movement, particularly in the valleys, in the direction of Papelotte would have been impossible.

The battle began late. Napoleon, as we have already explained, was in the habit of keeping all his artillery well in hand, like a pistol, aiming it now at one point, now at another, of the battle ; and it had been his wish to wait until the horse batteries could move and gallop freely. In order to do that it was necessary that the sun should come out and dry the soil. But the sun did not make its appearance. It was no longer the rendez-vous of Austerlitz. When the first cannon was fired, the English general, Colville, looked at his watch, and saw that it was twenty-five minutes to twelve.

The action was begun furiously, with more fury, perhaps, than the Emperor would have wished, by the left wing of the French resting on Hougomont. At the same time Napoleon attacked the centre by hurling Quiot's brigade on La Haie-Sainte, and Ney pushed forward the right wing of the French against the left wing of the English, which leaned on Papelotte.

The attack on Hougomont was something of a feint ; the plan was to attract Wellington thither, and to make him swerve to the left. This plan would have succeeded if the four companies of the English Guards and the brave Belgians of Perponcher's division had not held the position firmly, and Wellington, instead of massing his troops there, could confine himself to despatching thither, as reinforcements, only four more companies of Guards and one battalion of Brunswickers.

/ The attack of the right wing of the French on Papelotte was calculated, in fact, to overthrow the English left, to cut off the road to Brussels, to bar the passage against possible Prussians, to force Mont-Saint-Jean, to turn

Wellington back on Hougomont, thence on Braine-l'Alleud, thence on Halle; nothing easier. With the exception of a few incidents this attack succeeded. Papelotte was taken; La Haie-Sainte was carried.

A detail is to be noted. There was in the English infantry, particularly in Kempt's brigade, a great many young soldiers. These recruits were valiant in the presence of our redoubtable infantry; their inexperience extricated them intrepidly from the dilemma; they performed particularly excellent service as skirmishers: the soldier skirmisher, left somewhat to himself, becomes, so to speak, his own general. These recruits displayed some of the French ingenuity and fury. These novices had dash. This displeased Wellington.

After the taking of La Haie-Sainte the battle wavered.

There is in this day an obscure interval, from mid-day to four o'clock; the middle portion of this battle is almost indistinct, and participates in the sombreness of the hand-to-hand conflict. Twilight reigns over it. We perceive vast fluctuations in the mist, a dizzy mirage, paraphernalia of war almost unknown to-day, flaming colbacks, floating sabre-taches, cross-belts, cartridge-boxes for grenades, hussar dolmans, red boots with a thousand wrinkles, heavy shakos garlanded with gold lace, the almost black infantry of Brunswick mingled with the scarlet infantry of England, the English soldiers with great, white circular pads on the slopes of their shoulders for epaulets, the Hanoverian light-horse with their oblong casques of leather, with brass hands and red horse-tails, the Highlanders with their bare knees and plaids, the great white gaiters of our grenadiers; pictures, not strategic lines—what a canvas for a Salvator Rosa requires, but Gribauval would not have liked it.

A certain amount of tempest is always mingled with a battle. *Quid obscurum, quid divinum.* Each historian traces, to some extent, the particular feature which pleases him amid this pell-mell. Whatever may be the combinations of the generals, the shock of armed masses has an incalculable ebb and flow. During the action the



plans of the two leaders enter into each other and become mutually thrown out of shape. Such a point of the field of battle devours more combatants than such another, just as more or less spongy soils soak up more or less quickly the water which is poured on them. It becomes necessary to pour out more soldiers than one would like; a series of expenditures which are the unforeseen. The line of battle floats and undulates like a thread, the trails of blood gush illogically, the fronts of the armies waver, the regiments form capes and gulfs as they enter and withdraw; all these reefs are continually moving in front of each other. Where the infantry stood the artillery arrives, the cavalry rushes in where the artillery was, the battalions are like smoke. There was something there; search for it. It has disappeared; the open spots change place, the sombre folds advance and retreat, a sort of wind from the sepulchre pushes forward, hurls back, distends, and disperses these tragic multitudes. What is a battle? an oscillation? The immobility of a mathematical plan expresses a minute, not a day. To depict a battle, there is required one of those powerful painters who have chaos in their brushes. Rembrandt is better than Vandermeulen; Vandermeulen, exact at noon, lies at three o'clock. Geometry is deceptive; the hurricane alone is true. That is what confers on Folard the right to contradict Polybius. Let us add, that there is a certain moment when the battle degenerates into a combat, becomes specialized, and disperses into innumerable detailed feats, which, to borrow the expression of Napoleon himself, "belong rather to the biography of the regiments than to the history of the army." The historian has, in this case, the evident right to sum up the whole. He cannot do more than catch the principal outlines of the struggle, and it is not given to any one narrator, however conscientious he may be, to fix, absolutely, the form of that horrible cloud which is called a battle.

This, which is true of all great armed encounters, is particularly applicable to Waterloo.

Nevertheless, at a certain moment in the afternoon the battle came to a decided point.

## CHAPTER VI.

## FOUR O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON.

ABOUT four o'clock the condition of the English army was serious. The Prince of Orange was in command of the centre, Hill of the right wing, Picton of the left wing. The Prince of Orange, wild and intrepid, shouted to the Dutch Belgians: "Nassau! Brunswick! Don't yield an inch!" Hill, having been weakened, had come up to the support of Wellington; Picton was dead. At the very moment when the English had captured from the French the flag of the 105th of the line, the French had killed the English general, Picton, with a bullet through the head. The battle had, for Wellington, two bases of action, Hougomont and La Haie-Sainte; Hougomont still held out, but was on fire; La Haie-Sainte was taken. Of the German battalion which defended it, only forty-two men survived; all the officers, except five, were either dead or taken prisoners. Three thousand combatants had been massacred in that barn. A sergeant of the English Guards, the foremost boxer in England, reputed invulnerable by his companions, had been killed there by a little French drummer-boy. Barny had been dislodged, Alten sabred. Many flags had been lost, one from Alten's division, and one from the battalion of Lunenburg, carried by a prince of the house of Deux-Ponts. The Scots Greys no longer existed; Ponsonby's great dragoons had been cut to pieces. That valiant cavalry had bent beneath the lancers of Bro and beneath the cuirassiers of Travers; out of twelve hundred horses, six hundred remained; out of three lieutenant-colonels, two lay on the earth,—Hamilton wounded, Mater slain. Ponsonby had fallen, pierced by

seven lance-thrusts. Gordon was dead. Marsh was dead. Two divisions, the fifth and the sixth, had been annihilated.

Hougomont attacked, La Haie-Sainte taken, there now existed but one rallying-point, the centre. That point still held firm. Wellington reinforced it. He summoned thither Hill, who was at Merle-Braine; he summoned Chassé, who was at Braine-l'Alleud.

The centre of the English army, rather concave, very dense, and very compact, was strongly posted. It occupied the plateau of Mont-Saint-Jean, having behind it the village, and in front of it the slope, which was tolerably steep then. It rested on that stout stone dwelling which at that time belonged to the domain of Nivelles, standing at the cross-roads—a pile of the sixteenth century, and so robust that the cannon-balls rebounded from it without injuring it. All about the plateau the English had cut the hedges here and there, formed embrasures in the hawthorn-trees, thrust the throat of a cannon between two branches, embattled the shrubs. There artillery was ambushed in the brush-wood. This Punic task, incontestably authorized by war, which permits traps, was so well done, that Haxo, who had been despatched by the Emperor at nine o'clock in the morning to reconnoitre the enemy's batteries, had discovered nothing of it, and had returned and reported to Napoleon that there were no obstacles except the two barricades which barred the road to Nivelles and to Genappe. It was at the season when the grain is tall: on the edge of the plateau a battalion of Kempt's brigade, the 95th, armed with carabines, was concealed in the tall wheat.

Thus assured and buttressed, the centre of the Anglo-Dutch army was in a good position. The peril of this position lay in the forest of Soignes, then adjoining the field of battle, and intersected by the ponds of Groenen-dael and Boitsfort. An army could not retreat thither without dissolving; the regiments would have broken up immediately there. The artillery would have been lost among the marshes. The retreat, according to

many a man versed in the art of war,—though it is disputed by others,—would have been a disorganized flight.

To this centre, Wellington added one of Chassé's brigades taken from the right wing, and one of Wincke's brigades taken from the left wing, plus Clinton's division. To his English, to the regiments of Halkett, to the brigades of Mitchell, to the guards of Maitland, he gave as reinforcements and aids, the infantry of Brunswick, Nassau's contingent, Kielmansegg's Hanoverians, and Ompteda's Germans. He had thus twenty-six battalions under his hand. The right wing, as Charras says, was thrown back on the centre. An enormous battery was masked by sacks of earth at the spot where there now stands what is called the "Museum of Waterloo." Besides this, Wellington had, behind a rise in the ground, Somerset's Dragoon Guards, fourteen hundred horse strong. It was the remaining half of the justly celebrated English cavalry. Ponsonby destroyed, Somerset remained.

The battery, which, if completed, would have been almost a redoubt, was ranged behind a very low wall, backed up with a coating of bags of sand and a wide slope of earth. This work was not finished; there had been no time to make a palisade for it.

Wellington, restless but impassive, was on horseback, and there remained the whole day in the same attitude, a little in front of the old mill of Mont-Saint-Jean, which is still in existence, beneath an elm, which an Englishman, an enthusiastic vandal, purchased later on for two hundred francs, cut down, and carried off. Wellington was coldly heroic. The bullets rained about him. His aide-de-camp, Gordon, fell at his side. Lord Hill, pointing to a shell which had burst, said to him: "My lord, what are your orders in case you are killed?" "Do as I am doing," replied Wellington. To Clinton he said laconically, "To hold this spot to the last man." The day was evidently turning out ill. Wellington shouted to his old companions of Talavera, of Vittoria, of Salamanca: "Boys, can retreat be thought of? Think of old England!"

About four o'clock, the English line drew back. Sud-

denly nothing was visible on the crest of the plateau except the artillery and the sharpshooters; the rest had disappeared; the regiments, dislodged by the shells and the French bullets, retreated into the hollow, now intersected by the back road of the farm of Mont-Saint-Jean; a retrograde movement took place, the English front hid itself, Wellington recoiled. "The beginning of the retreat!" cried Napoleon.

---

## CHAPTER VII.

## NAPOLEON IN A GOOD HUMOUR. \*

THE Emperor, though ill and discommoded on horseback by a local trouble, had never been so good tempered as on that day. His impenetrability had been smiling ever since the morning. On the 18th of June, that profound soul masked by marble was radiant. The man who had been gloomy at Austerlitz was gay at Waterloo. The greatest favourites of destiny make mistakes. Our joys are composed of shadow. The supreme smile is God's alone.

*Ridet Cæsar, Pompeius flebit*, said the legionaries of the Fulminatrix Legion. Pompey was not destined to weep on that occasion, but it is certain that Cæsar laughed. While exploring on horseback at one o'clock on the preceding night, in storm and rain, in company with Bertrand, the hills in the neighbourhood of Rossomme, satisfied at the sight of the long line of the English camp-fires illuminating the whole horizon from Frischemont to Braine-l'Alleud, it had seemed to him that fate, to whom he had assigned a day on the field of Waterloo, was exact to the appointment; he stopped his horse, and remained for some time motionless, gazing at the lightning and listening to the thunder; and this fatalist was heard to cast into the darkness this mysterious saying, "We are in accord." Napoleon was mistaken. They were no longer in accord.

He had not slept a moment ; every instant of that night was marked by a joy for him. He rode through the line of the principal outposts, halting here and there to talk to the sentinels. At half-past two, near the wood of Hougomont, he heard the tread of a column on the march ; he thought at the moment that it was a retreat on the part of Wellington. He said : " It is the rear-guard of the English getting under way for the purpose of decamping. I will take prisoners the six thousand English who have just landed at Ostend " He talked expansively ; he regained the animation which he had shown at his landing on the 1st of March, when he pointed out to the Grand-Marshal the enthusiastic peasant of the Gulf Juan, and cried, " Well, Bertrand, here is a reinforcement already ! " On the night of the 17th to the 18th of June he made fun of Wellington. " That little Englishman needs a lesson," said Napoleon. The rain redoubled in violence ; it thundered while the Emperor was speaking.

At half-past three o'clock in the morning, he lost one illusion ; officers who had been despatched to reconnoitre announced to him that the enemy was not making any movement. Nothing was stirring ; not a bivouac-fire had been extinguished ; the English army was asleep. The silence on earth was profound ; the only noise was in the heavens. At four o'clock, a peasant was brought in to him by the scouts ; this peasant had served as guide to a brigade of English cavalry, probably Vivian's brigade, which was on its way to take up a position in the village of Ohain, at the extreme left. At five o'clock, two Belgian deserters reported to him that they had just quitted their regiment, and that the English army meant to fight. " All the better ! " exclaimed Napoleon. " I prefer to overthrow them rather than to drive them back."

At daybreak he dismounted in the mud on the slope which forms an angle with the Plancenoit road, had a kitchen table and a peasant's chair brought to him from the farm of Rossomme, seated himself, with a truss of

straw for a carpet, and spread out on the table the chart of the battle-field, saying to Soult as he did so, "A pretty chess-board."

In consequence of the rains during the night, the transports of provisions, embedded in the soft roads, had not been able to arrive by morning; the soldiers had had no sleep; they were wet and famished. This did not prevent Napoleon from exclaiming cheerfully to Ney, "We have ninety chances out of a hundred." At eight o'clock the Emperor's breakfast was brought to him. He invited several generals to it. During breakfast, it was said that Wellington had been to a ball two nights before, in Brussels, at the Duchess of Richmond's; and Soult, a rough man of war, with the face of an archbishop said, "The ball will be to-day." The Emperor jested with Ney, who had said, "Wellington will not be so simple as to wait for Your Majesty." That was his way, however. "He was fond of a joke," says Fleury de Chaboulon. "A merry humour was at the foundation of his character," says Gourgaud. "He abounded in pleasantries, which were more peculiar than witty," says Benjamin Constant. These gaieties of a giant are worthy of comment. It was he who called his grenadiers "his growlers"; he pinched their ears; he pulled their moustaches. "The Emperor did nothing but play pranks on us," is the remark of one of them. During the mysterious trip from the island of Elba to France, on the 27th of February, on the open sea, the French brig of war, *Le Zéphyr*, having encountered the brig *L'Inconstant*, on which Napoleon was concealed, and having asked the news of Napoleon from *L'Inconstant*, the Emperor, who still wore in his hat the white and violet cockade sown with bees, which he had adopted at the isle of Elba, laughingly seized the speaking-trumpet, and answered for himself, "The Emperor is quite well." A man who laughs like that is on familiar terms with events. Napoleon indulged in many fits of this laughter during the breakfast at Waterloo. After breakfast he meditated for a quarter of an

hour; then two generals seated themselves on the truss of straw, pen in hand and their paper on their knees, and the Emperor dictated to them the order of battle.

At nine o'clock, at the instant when the French army, ranged in echelons and moving in five columns, had deployed—the divisions in two lines, the artillery between the brigades, the music at their head; as they beat the march, with rolls on the drums and the blasts of trumpets, mighty, vast, joyous, a sea of casques, of sabres, and of bayonets on the horizon, the Emperor was touched, and twice exclaimed, "Magnificent! Magnificent!"

Between nine o'clock and half-past ten the whole army, incredible as it may appear, had taken up its position and was drawn up in six lines, forming, to repeat the Emperor's expression, "the figure of six V's." A few moments after the formation of the line, in the midst of that profound silence, like that which heralds the beginning of a storm, which precedes battle, the Emperor tapped Haxo on the shoulder, as he beheld the three batteries or twelve-pounders, detached by his orders from the corps of Erlon, Reille, and Lobau, and destined to begin the action by taking Mont-Saint-Jean, which was situated at the intersection of the Nivelles and the Genappe roads, and said to him, "There are four and twenty pretty girls, General."

Sure of the result, he encouraged with a smile, as they passed before him, the company of sappers of the first corps, which he had appointed to barricade Mont-Saint-Jean as soon as the village should be carried. All this serenity had been traversed by but a single word of human pity; perceiving on his left, at a spot where there now stands a large tomb, those admirable Scots Greys, with their superb horses, massing themselves, he said, "It is a pity."

Then he mounted his horse, advanced beyond Rosomme, and selected for his coign of vantage a contracted elevation of turf to the right of the road from Genappe to Brussels, which was his second station during the battle. The third station, the one adopted at seven



o'clock in the evening, between La Belle-Alliance and La Haie-Sainte, is formidable; it is a rather lofty mound, which still exists, and behind which the guard was massed in a hollow. Around this knoll the balls rebounded from the pavements of the road, up to Napoleon himself. As at Brienne, he had over his head the whistle of the bullets and canister. Mouldy cannon-balls, old sword-blades, and shapeless projectiles, eaten up with rust, have been picked up at the spot where his horse's feet stood. *Scabra rubigine*. A few years ago, a shell of sixty pounds, still charged, and with its fuse broken off level with the bomb, was unearthed. It was at this station that the Emperor said to his guide, Lacoste, a hostile and timid peasant, who was attached to the saddle of a hussar, and who turned round at every discharge of canister and tried to hide behind Napoleon: "You ass, it is shameful! You'll get yourself killed with a ball in the back." He who writes these lines has himself found, in the friable soil of this knoll, on turning over the sand, the remains of the neck of a bomb, rotted by the oxide of six and forty years, and old fragments of iron which parted like sticks of barley sugar between the fingers.

Every one is aware that the variously inclined undulations of the plains, where the encounter between Napoleon and Wellington took place, are no longer what they were on June 18, 1815. On taking from this mournful field the wherewithal to make a monument to it, its real relief has been taken away, and history, disconcerted, no longer finds her bearings there. It has been disfigured for the sake of glorifying it. Wellington, when he beheld Waterloo once more, two years later, exclaimed, "They have altered my field of battle!" Where the huge pyramid of earth, surmounted by the lion, rises to-day, there was a crest which descended in an easy slope towards the Nivelles road, but which was almost an escarpment on the side of the highway to Genappe. The elevation of this escarpment can still be imagined by the height of the two knolls of the two great sepulchres

which enclose the road from Genappe to Brussels : one, the English tomb, is on the left ; the other, the German tomb, is on the right. There is no French tomb. The whole of that plain is a sepulchre for France. Thanks to the thousands of cartloads of earth employed in erecting the mound one hundred and fifty feet in height and half a mile in circumference, the plateau of Mont-Saint-Jean is now accessible by an easy slope. On the day of battle, particularly on the side of La Haie-Sainte, it was abrupt and difficult of approach. The incline there is so steep that the English cannon could not see the farm, situated in the bottom of the valley, which was the centre of the combat. On the 18th of June, 1815, the rains had still further increased this acclivity, the mud complicated the problem of the ascent, and the men not only slipped back, but stuck fast in the mire. Along the crest of the plateau ran a sort of trench whose presence it was impossible for the distant observer to guess.

What was this trench ? Let us explain. Braine-l'Alleud is a Belgian village ; Ohain is another. These villages, both of them hidden in hollows of the landscape, are connected by a road about a league and a half in length, which traverses the plain along its undulating level, and often enters and buries itself in the hills like a furrow, which makes a ravine of this road in certain parts. In 1815, as to-day, this road cut the crest of the plateau of Mont-Saint-Jean between the two highways from Genappe and Nivelles ; only, it is now on a level with the plain ; it was then a hollow way. Its two slopes have been appropriated for the monumental mound. This road was, and still is, a trench for the greater portion of its course ; a hollow trench, sometimes a dozen feet in depth, and whose banks, being too steep, crumbled away here and there, particularly in winter, under driving rains. Accidents happened here. The road was so narrow at the Braine-l'Alleud entrance that a passer-by was crushed by a cart, as is proved by a stone cross which stands near the cemetery, and

which gives the name of the dead, *Monsieur Bernard Debrye, Merchant of Brussels*, and the date of the accident, *February, 1637*. It was so deep on the plateau of Mont-Saint-Jean that a peasant, Mathieu Nicaise, was crushed there, in 1783, by a slide from the slope, as is stated on another stone cross, the top of which has disappeared in the excavations, but whose overturned pedestal is still visible on the grassy slope to the left of the highway between La Haie-Sainte and the farm of Mont-Saint-Jean.

On the day of battle, this hollow road whose existence was in no way indicated, bordering the crest of Mont-Saint-Jean, a trench at the top of the escarpment, a rut concealed in the soil, was invisible ; that is to say, terrible.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE EMPEROR ASKS THE GUIDE A QUESTION.

ON the morning of Waterloo, then, Napoleon was content.

He was right ; the plan of battle drawn up by him was, as we have seen, really admirable.

The battle once begun, its various incidents,—the resistance of Hougomont ; the tenacity of La Haie-Sainte ; the killing of Bauduin ; the disabling of Foy ; the unexpected wall against which Soye's brigade was broken ; Guilleminot's fatal heedlessness when he had neither petard nor powder sacks ; the sticking of the batteries in the mud ; the fifteen unescorted pieces overwhelmed in a hollow way by Uxbridge ; the small effect of the shells falling in the English lines, and there embedding themselves in the rain-soaked soil, and only succeeding in producing volcanoes of mud, so that the canister was turned into a splash ; the inutility of Piré's demonstration on Braine-l'Alleud ; all that cavalry, fifteen squadrons almost annihilated ; the right wing of the English badly alarmed, the left wing poorly attacked ; Ney's strange mistake in massing, instead of

echelonning the four divisions of the first corps ; men delivered over to grape-shot, arranged in ranks twenty-seven deep and with a frontage of two hundred ; the terrible gaps made in these masses by the cannon-balls ; attacking columns disorganized ; the side-battery suddenly unmasked on their flank ; Bourgeois, Donzelot, and Durutte compromised ; Quoit repulsed ; Lieutenant Vieux, that Hercules graduated at the Polytechnic School, wounded at the moment when he was beating in with an axe the door of La Haie-Sainte under the downright fire of the English barricade which barred the angle on the Genappe road ; Marcognet's division caught between the infantry and the cavalry, shot down at the very muzzle of the guns amid the grain by Best and Pack, put to the sword by Ponsonby ; his battery of seven pieces spiked ; the Prince of Saxe-Weimar holding and guarding, in spite of the Comte d'Erlon, both Frischemont and Smohain ; the flags of the 105th taken, the flags of the 45th captured ; that black Prussian hussar stopped by the flying column of three hundred light cavalry on the scout between Wavre and Plancenoit ; the alarming things that had been said by prisoners ; Grouchy's delay ; fifteen hundred men killed in the orchard of Hougomont in less than an hour ; eighteen hundred men overthrown in a still shorter time about La Haie-Sainte,—all these stormy incidents passing like the clouds of battle before Napoleon, had hardly troubled his gaze and had not overshadowed his imperial face. Napoleon was accustomed to gaze steadily at war ; he never added up the poignant details. He cared little for figures, provided that they furnished the total, victory ; he was not alarmed if the beginnings did go astray, since he thought himself the master and the possessor at the end ; he knew how to wait, supposing himself to be out of the question, and he treated destiny as his equal : he seemed to say to fate, You would not dare.

Composed half of light and half of shadow, Napoleon felt himself protected in good and tolerated in evil. He had, or thought that he had, a connivance, one

might almost say a complicity, of events in his favour, which was equivalent to the invulnerability of antiquity.

Nevertheless, when one has Bérésina, Leipzig, and Fontainebleau behind one, it seems as though one might defy Waterloo. A mysterious frown becomes perceptible on the face of the heavens.

At the moment when Wellington retreated, Napoleon quivered. He suddenly beheld the plateau of Mont-Saint-Jean deserted, and the van of the English army disappear. It was rallying, but hiding itself. The Emperor half rose in his stirrups. Victory flashed from his eyes.

Wellington, driven into a corner at the forest of Soignes and destroyed—that was the definitive conquest of England by France; it would be Crécy, Poitiers, Malplaquet, and Ramillies avenged. The man of Marengo was wiping out Agincourt.

So the Emperor, meditating on this terrible turn of fortune, swept his glass for the last time over all the points of the field of battle. His guard, standing behind him with grounded arms, watched him from below with a sort of religious awe. He pondered; he examined the slopes, noted the declivities, scrutinized the clumps of trees, the patches of rye, the path; he seemed to be counting each bush. He gazed with some intentness at the English barricades of the two highways,—two large masses of felled trees, the one on the road to Genappe above La Haie-Sainte, defended with two cannon, the only ones out of all the English artillery which commanded the extremity of the field of battle, and that on the road to Nivelles where gleamed the Dutch bayonets of Chassé's brigade. Near this barricade he observed the old chapel of Saint Nicholas, which stands at the angle of the cross-road near Braine-l'Alleud; he bent down and spoke in a low voice to the guide Lacoste. The guide made a negative sign with his head, which was probably perfidious.

The Emperor straightened himself up and reflected.

Wellington had withdrawn.

All that remained to do was to complete this retreat by crushing him.

Napoleon turning round abruptly, despatched an express at full speed to Paris to announce that the battle was won.

Napoleon was one of those geniuses from whom thunder issues.

He had just found his thunder-stroke.

He gave orders to Milhaud's cuirassiers to carry the plateau of Mont-Saint-Jean.

## CHAPTER IX.

### A SURPRISE.

THERE were three thousand five hundred of **them**. They formed a front a quarter of a league in length. They were giants, on colossal horses. There were six and twenty squadrons of them; and they had behind them to support them Lefebvre-Desnouettes's division,—the one hundred and six picked gendarmes, the light cavalry of the Guard, eleven hundred and ninety-seven men, and the lancers of the guard of eight hundred and eighty lances. They wore **casques** without plumes, and cuirasses of beaten iron, with horse-pistols in their holsters, and long sabre-swords. That morning the whole army had admired them, when, at nine o'clock, with blare of trumpets and all the music playing "Let us watch o'er the Safety of the Empire," they had come in a solid column, with one of their batteries on their flank, another in their centre, and deployed in two ranks between the roads to Genappe and Frischemont, and taken up their position for battle in that powerful second line, so cleverly arranged by Napoleon, which, having on its extreme left Kellermann's cuirassiers and on its extreme right Milhaud's cuirassiers, **had, so to speak, two wings of iron.**

The aide-de-camp Bernard carried them the Emperor's orders. Ney drew his sword and placed himself at their head. The enormous squadrons were set in motion.

Then a formidable spectacle was seen.

The whole of the cavalry, with upraised swords, standards and trumpets flung to the breeze, formed in columns by divisions, descended, by a simultaneous movement and like one man, with the precision of a brazen battering-ram which is affecting a breach, the hill of La Belle Alliance. They plunged into the terrible depths in which so many men had already fallen, disappeared there in the smoke, then emerging from that shadow, reappeared on the other side of the valley, still compact and in close ranks, mounting at a full trot, through a storm of grape-shot which burst upon them, the terrible muddy slope of the plateau of Mont-Saint-Jean. They ascended, grave, threatening, imperturbable; in the intervals between the musketry and the artillery, their colossal trampling was audible. Being two divisions, there were two columns of them; Wathier's division held the right, Delort's division was on the left. It seemed as though two immense steel lizards were to be seen crawling towards the crest of the plateau. They traversed the battle like a flash.

Nothing like it had been seen since the taking of the great redoubt of the Moskowa by the heavy cavalry; Murat was missing, but Ney was again present. It seemed as though that mass had become a monster and had but one soul. Each column undulated and swelled like the rings of a polyp. They could be seen through a vast cloud of smoke which was rent at intervals. A confusion of helmets, of cries, of sabres, a stormy heaving of horses amid the cannons and the flourish of trumpets, a terrible and disciplined tumult; over all, the cuirasses like the scales on the dragon.

These narrations seemed to belong to another age. Something parallel to this vision appeared, no doubt, in the ancient Orphic epics, which told of the cen-

taurs, the old hippanthropes, those Titans with human heads and equestrian chests who scaled Olympus at a gallop, horrible, invulnerable, sublime—gods and brutes.

It was a curious numerical coincidence that twenty-six battalions rode to meet twenty-six battalions. Behind the crest of the plateau, in the shadow of the masked battery, the English infantry, formed into thirteen squares, two battalions to the square, in two lines, with seven in the first line, six in the second, the stocks of their guns to their shoulders, taking aim at that which was on the point of appearing, waited, calm, mute, motionless. They did not see the cuirassiers, and the cuirassiers did not see them. They listened to the rise of this tide of men. They heard the swelling sound of three thousand horse, the alternate and symmetrical tramp of their hoofs at full trot, the jingling of the cuirasses, the clang of the sabres, and a sort of grand and formidable breathing. There was a long and terrible silence; then, all at once, a long file of uplifted arms, brandishing sabres, appeared above the crest, and casques, trumpets, and standards, and three thousand heads with grey moustaches, shouting, "Vive l'Empereur!" All this cavalry debouched on the plateau, and it was like the beginning of an earthquake.

All at once, a tragic incident happened; on the English left, on our right, the head of the column of cuirassiers reared up with a frightful clamour. On arriving at the culminating point of the crest, ungovernable, utterly given over to fury and their course of extermination of the squares and cannon, the cuirassiers had just caught sight of a trench or grave,—a trench between them and the English. It was the hollow road of Ohain.

It was a frightful moment. The ravine was there, unexpected, yawning, directly under the horses' feet, two fathoms deep between its double slopes; the second file pushed the first into it, and the third pushed on the second; the horses reared and fell backward, landed on their haunches, slid down, all four feet in the air,



crushing and overwhelming the riders ; and there being no means of retreat,—the whole column being no longer anything more than a projectile,—the force which had been acquired to crush the English crushed the French ; the inexorable ravine could only yield when filled ; horses and riders rolled there pell-mell, grinding each other, forming but one mass of flesh in this gulf : when this trench was full of living men, the rest marched over them and passed on. Nearly a third of Dubois's brigade fell into that abyss.

This began the loss of the battle.

A local tradition, which evidently exaggerates matters, says that two thousand horses and fifteen hundred men were buried in the hollow road of Ohain. This figure probably comprises all the other corpses which were flung into this ravine the day after the combat.

Let us note in passing that it was Dubois's sorely tried brigade which, an hour previously, making a charge to one side, had captured the flag of the Lunenburg battalion.

Napoleon, before giving the order for this charge of Milhaud's cuirassiers, had scrutinized the ground, but had not been able to see that hollow road, which did not even form a wrinkle on the crest of the plateau. Warned, nevertheless, and put on his guard by the little white chapel which marks its angle of juncture with the Nivelles highway, he had put a question as to the possibility of an obstacle, to the guide Lacoste. The guide had answered No. We might almost say that Napoleon's catastrophe originated in the shake of a peasant's head.

Other fatalities were yet to arise.

Was it possible for Napoleon to win that battle ? We answer No. Why ? Because of Wellington ? Because of Blücher ? No. Because of God.

Bonaparte victor at Waterloo does not harmonise with the law of the nineteenth century. Another series of facts was in preparation, in which there was no longer any room for Napoleon. The ill will of events had declared itself long before.

It was time that this vast man should fall.

The excessive weight of this man in human destiny disturbed the balance. This individual alone counted for more than the universal group. These plethoras of all human vitality concentrated in a single head : the world mounting to the brain of one man,—this would be mortal to civilization were it to last. The moment had arrived for the incorruptible and supreme equity to alter its plan. Probably the principles and the elements, on which the regular gravitations of the moral, as of the material, world depend, had complained. Smoking blood, overcrowded cemeteries, mothers in tears,—these are formidable pleaders. When the earth is suffering from too heavy a burden, there are mysterious groanings of the shades, to which the abyss lends an ear.

Napoleon had been denounced in the infinite, and his fall had been decided on.

Waterloo is not a battle ; it is a transformation on the part of the Universe.

---

## CHAPTER X.

### THE PLATEAU OF MONT-SAINT-JEAN.

THE battery was unmasked simultaneously with the ravine.

Sixty cannons and the thirteen squares darted lightning point-blank on the cuirassiers. The intrepid General Delort made the military salute to the English battery.

The whole of the flying artillery of the English had entered the squares at a gallop. The cuirassiers had not had even the time for reflection. The disaster of the hollow road had decimated, but not discouraged them. They belonged to that class of men who, when diminished in number, increase in courage.

Wathier's column alone had suffered in the disaster ; Delort's column, which had been deflected to the left, as though he had a presentiment of an ambush, had arrived whole.

## LES MISÉRABLES.

The cuirassiers hurled themselves on the English squares.

At full speed, with bridles loose, swords in their teeth, pistols in their hand,—such was the attack.

There are moments in battles in which the soul hardens the man until the soldier is changed into a statue, and when all flesh becomes granite. The English battalions, desperately assaulted, did not stir.

Then it was terrible.

All the faces of the English squares were attacked at once. A frenzied whirl enveloped them. That cold infantry remained impassive. The first rank knelt and received the cuirassiers on their bayonets, the second rank shot them down; behind the second rank the cannoneers charged their guns, the front of the square parted, permitted the passage of an eruption of grape-shot, and closed again. The cuirassiers replied by crushing them. Their great horses reared, strode across the ranks, leaped over the bayonets and fell, gigantic, in the midst of these four living walls. The cannonballs ploughed furrows in these cuirassiers; the cuirassiers made breaches in the squares. Files of men disappeared, ground to dust under the horses. The bayonets plunged into the bellies of these centaurs; hence a hideousness of wounds which has probably never been seen anywhere else. The squares, wasted by this mad cavalry, closed up their ranks without flinching. Inexhaustible in the matter of grape-shot, they created explosions in their assailants' midst. The form of this combat was monstrous. These squares were no longer battalions, they were craters; those cuirassiers were no longer cavalry, they were a tempest. Each square was a volcano attacked by a cloud; lava combated with lightning.

The extreme right square, the most exposed of all, being in the air, was almost annihilated at the very first attack. It was formed of the 75th regiment of Highlanders. The piper in the centre dropped his melancholy eyes, filled with the reflections of the forests and the

lakes, in profound inattention, while men were being exterminated around him, and seated on a drum, with his pibroch under his arm, played the Highland airs. These Scotchmen died thinking of Ben Lotbian, as did the Greeks remembering Argos. The sword of a cuirassier, which hewed down the bagpipes and the arm which bore it, put an end to the song by killing the singer.

The cuirassiers, relatively few in number, and still further diminished by the catastrophe of the ravine, had almost the whole English army against them, but they multiplied themselves so that each man of them was equal to ten. Nevertheless, some Hanoverian battalions yielded. Wellington saw it, and thought of his cavalry. Had Napoleon at that same moment thought of his infantry, he would have won the battle. This forgetfulness was his great and fatal mistake.

All at once, the cuirassiers, who had been the assailants, found themselves assailed. The English cavalry was at their back. Before them two squares, behind them Somerset; Somerset meant fourteen hundred dragoons of the guard. On the right, Somerset had Dornberg with the German light-horse, and on his left, Trip with the Belgian carabineers; the cuirassiers attacked on the flank and in front, before and in the rear, by infantry and cavalry, had to face all sides. What did they care? They were a whirlwind. Their valour was indescribable.

In addition to this, they had behind them the battery, which was still thundering. It was necessary that it should be so, or they could never have been wounded in the back. One of their cuirasses, pierced on the shoulder by a ball, is in the Waterloo Museum.

For such Frenchmen nothing less than such Englishmen was needed. It was no longer a hand-to-hand *mêlée*; it was a shadow, a fury, a dizzy transport of souls and courage, a hurricane of lightning swords. In an instant the fourteen hundred dragoon guards numbered only eight hundred. Fuller, their lieutenant-

colonel, fell dead. Ney rushed up with the lancers and Lefebvre-Desnouettes's light-horse. The plateau of Mont-Saint-Jean was captured, recaptured, captured again. The cuirassiers left the cavalry to return to the infantry ; or, to put it more exactly, the whole of that formidable rout collared each other without releasing the other. The squares still held firm, after a dozen assaults. Ney had four horses killed under him. Half the cuirassiers remained on the plateau. This struggle lasted two hours.

The English army was profoundly shaken. There is no doubt that, had they not been enfeebled in their first shock by the disaster of the hollow road, the cuirassiers would have overwhelmed the centre and decided the victory. This extraordinary cavalry petrified Clinton, who had seen Talavera and Badajoz. Wellington, three-quarters vanquished, admired heroically. He said in an undertone, " Splendid ! "

The cuirassiers annihilated seven squares out of thirteen, took or spiked sixty guns, and captured from the English regiments six flags, which three cuirassiers and three chasseurs of the Guard bore to the Emperor in front of the farm of La Belle Alliance.

Wellington's situation had grown worse. This strange battle was like a duel between two savage, wounded men, each of whom, still fighting and still resisting, is expending all his blood.

Which will be the first to fall ?

The conflict on the plateau continued.

What had become of the cuirassiers ? No one could have told. One thing is certain, that on the day after the battle, a cuirassier and his horse were found dead among the woodwork of the scales for vehicles at Mont-Saint-Jean, at the very point where the four roads from Nivelles, Genappe, La Hulpe, and Brussels meet and intersect each other. This horseman had pierced the English lines. One of the men who picked up the body still lives at Mont-Saint-Jaen. His name is Dehaye. He was eighteen years old at that time.

Wellington felt that he was yielding. The crisis was at hand.

The cuirassiers had not succeeded, since the centre was not broken through. As every one was in possession of the plateau, no one held it, and in fact it remained, to a great extent, in the hands of the English. Wellington held the village and the plain; Ney had only the crest and the slope. They seemed rooted in that fatal soil on both sides.

But the weakening of the English seemed irremediable. The hæmorrhage of that army was horrible. Kempt, on the left wing, demanded reinforcements. "There are none," replied Wellington. Almost at that same moment, a singular coincidence which depicts the exhaustion of the two armies, Ney demanded infantry from Napoleon, and Napoleon exclaimed, "Infantry! Where does he expect me to get it? Does he think I can make it?"

Nevertheless, the English army was in the worse plight of the two. The furious onsets of those great squadrons with cuirasses of iron and breasts of steel had crushed the infantry. A few men clustered round a flag marked the post of a regiment; some battalions were commanded only by a captain or a lieutenant; Alten's division, already so roughly handled at La Haie-Sainte, was almost destroyed; the intrepid Belgians of Van Kluze's brigade strewed the rye-fields all along the Nivelles road; hardly anything was left of those Dutch grenadiers, who, intermingled with Spaniards in our ranks in 1811, fought against Wellington; and who, in 1815, rallied to the English standard, fought against Napoleon. The loss in officers was considerable. Lord Uxbridge, who had his leg buried on the following day, had a fractured knee. If, on the French side, in that tussle of the cuirassiers, Delort, l'Héritier, Colbert, Dnop, Travers, and Blancard were disabled, on the side of the English there was Alten wounded, Barne wounded, Delancey killed, Van Meeren killed, Ompteda killed, the whole of Wellington's staff decimated, and England had the heaviest loss of it in that balance of blood.

The second regiment of foot-guards had lost five lieutenant-colonels, four captains, and three ensigns; the first battalion of the 30th infantry had lost 24 officers and 1200 soldiers; the 79th Highlanders had lost 24 officers wounded, 18 officers killed, 450 soldiers killed. Cumberland's Hanoverian hussars, a whole regiment, with Colonel Hacke at its head, who was destined to be tried later on and cashiered, had turned bridle in the presence of the fray, and had fled to the forest of Soignes, spreading the rout as far as Brussels. The transports, ammunition-wagons, the baggage-wagons, the wagons filled with wounded, on seeing that the French were gaining ground and approaching the forest, pushed into it. The Dutch, mowed down by the French cavalry, cried, "Alarm!" From Vert-Coucou to Groentendael, a distance of nearly two leagues in the direction of Brussels, according to the testimony of eye-witnesses who are still alive, the roads were dense with fugitives. This panic was such that it attacked the Prince de Condé at Mechlin, and Louis XVIII. at Ghent. With the exception of the feeble reserve echeloned behind the ambulance established at the farm of Mont-Saint-Jean, and of Vivian's and Vandeleur's brigades, which flanked the left wing, Wellington had no cavalry left. A number of batteries lay dismounted. These facts are attested by Siborne; and Pringle, exaggerating the disaster, goes so far as to say that the Anglo-Dutch army was reduced to thirty-four thousand men. The Iron Duke remained calm, but his lips blanched. Vincent, the Austrian commissioner, Alava, the Spanish commissioner, who were present at the battle in the English staff, thought the Duke lost. At five o'clock Wellington drew out his watch, and he was heard to murmur these sinister words, "Blücher, or night!"

It was at about that moment that a distant line of bayonets gleamed on the heights in the direction of Frischemont.

This was the culminating point in this stupendous drama.

## CHAPTER XI.

## BÜLOW TO THE RESCUE.

THE awful mistake of Napoleon is well known. Grouchy expected, Blücher arriving. Death instead of life.

Fate has these turns; the throne of the world was expected; it was Saint Helena that was seen.

If the little shepherd who served as guide to Bülow, Blücher's lieutenant, had advised him to debouch from the forest above Frischemont, instead of below Plancenoit, the form of the nineteenth century might, perhaps, have been different. Napoleon would have won the battle of Waterloo. By any other route than that below Plancenoit, the Prussian army would have come out upon a ravine impassable for artillery, and Bülow would not have arrived.

Now the Prussian general, Muffling, declares that one hour's delay, and Blücher would not have found Wellington on his feet. "The battle was lost."

It was time that Bülow should arrive, as we shall see. He had, moreover, been very much delayed. He had bivouacked at Dieu-le-Mont, and had set out at daybreak; but the roads were impassable, and his divisions stuck fast in the mud. The ruts were up to the axles of the cannons. Moreover, he had been obliged to pass the Dyle on the narrow bridge of Wavre; the street leading to the bridge had been fired by the French, so the caissons and ammunition wagons could not pass between two rows of burning houses, and had been obliged to wait until the conflagration was extinguished. It was mid-day before Bülow's vanguard had been able to reach Chapelle-Saint-Lambert.

Had the action begun two hours earlier, it would have been over at four o'clock, and Blücher would have fallen on the battle won by Napoleon. Such are these immense risks proportioned to an infinite which we cannot comprehend.



The Emperor had been the first, as early as mid-day, to descry with his field-glass, on the extreme horizon, something which had attracted his attention. He had said, "I see over there a cloud, which seems to me to be troops." Then he asked the Duc de Dalmatie, "Soult, what do you see in the direction of Chapelle-Saint-Lambert?" The marshal, looking through his glass, answered, 'Four or five thousand men, Sire.' It was evidently Grouchy. But it remained motionless in the mist. All the glasses of the staff had studied "the cloud" pointed out by the Emperor. Some said: "They are columns halting." The truth is, that the cloud did not move. The Emperor detached Domon's division of light cavalry to reconnoitre in that direction.

Bülow had not moved in fact. His vanguard was very feeble, and could accomplish nothing. He was obliged to wait for the main body of the army corps, and he had received orders to concentrate his forces, before entering into line; but at five o'clock, perceiving Wellington's peril, Blücher ordered Bülow to attack, and uttered these remarkable words: "We must let the English army breathe."

A little later, the divisions of Losthin, Hiller, Hacke, and Ryssel deployed before Lobau's corps, the cavalry of Prince William of Russia debouched from the Bois de Paris, Plancenoit was in flames, and the Prussian cannon-balls began to rain even upon the ranks of the guard in reserve behind Napoleon.

---

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE GUARD.

THE rest is known,—the irruption of a third army; the battle broken to pieces; eighty-six cannon thundering simultaneously; Pirch the first coming up with Bülow; Zieten's cavalry led by Blücher in person, the French driven back; Marcognet swept from the plateau of

Ohain ; Durutte dislodged from Papelotte ; Donzelot and Quiot retreating ; Lobau attacked on the flank ; a fresh battle precipitating itself on our dismantled regiments at nightfall ; the whole English line resuming the offensive and thrust forward ; the gigantic breach made in the French army ; the English grape-shot and the Prussian grape-shot aiding each other ; the extermination ; disaster in front ; disaster on the flank ; the Guard entering the line in the midst of this terrible crumbling of all things.

Conscious that they were about to die, they shouted, " Long live the Emperor ! " History records nothing more touching than that death-rattle bursting forth in acclamations.

The sky had been overcast all day. All of a sudden, at that very moment,—it was eight o'clock in the evening,—the clouds on the horizon parted, and allowed the sinister red glow of the setting sun to pass through, athwart the elms on the Nivelles road. They had seen it rise at Austerlitz.

Each battalion of the Guard was commanded by a general for this final *dénouement*. Friant, Michel, Roguet, Harlet, Mallet, Poret de Morvan, were there. When the tall bearskins of the grenadiers of the Guard, with their large plaques bearing the eagle, appeared, symmetrical, in line, tranquil, in the midst of that combat, the enemy felt a respect for France ; they thought they beheld twenty victories entering the field of battle, with wings outspread, and those who were the conquerors, believing themselves to be vanquished, retreated ; but Wellington shouted, " Up, Guards, and take steady aim ! " The red regiment of English Guards, lying flat behind the hedges, sprang up, a cloud of grape-shot riddled the tricoloured flag and whistled round our eagles ; all hurled themselves forwards, and the supreme carnage began. In the darkness, the Imperial Guard felt the army losing ground around it, and in the vast shock of the rout it heard the desperate flight which had taken the place of the " Long livé the Emperor ! "

and, with flight behind it, it continued to advance, more crushed, losing more men at every step it took. There were none who hesitated, no timid men in its ranks. The soldier in that troop was as much of a hero as the general. Not a man was missing in that heroic suicide.

Ney, bewildered, great with all the grandeur of accepted death, offered himself to all blows in that tempest. He had his fifth horse killed under him there. Perspiring, his eyes aflame, foam on his lips, with uniform unbuttoned, one of his epaulets half cut off by a sword-stroke from the horse-guard, his plaque with the great eagle dented by a bullet; bleeding, bemired, magnificent, a broken sword in his hand, he said, "Come and see how a Marshal of France dies on the field of battle!" But in vain; he did not die. He was haggard and angry. At Drouet d'Erlon he hurled this question, "Are you not going to get yourself killed?" In the midst of all that artillery engaged in crushing a handful of men, he shouted: "So there is nothing for me! Oh! I should like to have all these English bullets enter my chest!" Unhappy man, thou wert reserved for French bullets!

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE CATASTROPHE.

THE rout in the rear of the Guard was melancholy.

The army yielded suddenly on all sides simultaneously. —Hougomont, La Haie-Sainte, Papelotte, Plancenoit. The cry, "Treachery!" was followed by a cry of "Save yourselves who can!" An army which is disbanding is like a thaw. All yields, splits, cracks, floats, rolls, falls, collides, is precipitated. The disintegration is unprecedented. Ney borrows a horse, leaps upon it, and without hat, cravat, or sword, dashes across the Brussels road, stopping both English and French. He strives to

detain the army, he recalls it to its duty, he insults it, he clings to the rout. He is overwhelmed. The soldiers fly from him, shouting, "Long live Marshal Ney!" Two of Durutte's regiments go and come in affright as though tossed back and forth between the swords of the Uhlans and the fusillade of the brigades of Kempt, Best, Pack, and Ryland; the worst of hand-to-hand conflicts is the defeat; friends kill each other in order to escape; squadrons and battalions break and disperse against each other, like the tremendous foam of battle. Lobau at one extremity, and Reille at the other, are drawn into the tide. In vain does Napoleon erect walls from what is left to him of his Guard; in vain does he expend in a last effort his last serviceable squadrons. Quiot retreats before Vivian, Kellermann before Vandeleur, Lobau before Bülow, Morand before Pirch, Dornon and Subervic before Prince William of Prussia; Guyot, who led the Emperor's squadrons to the charge, falls beneath the feet of the English dragoons. Napoleon gallops past the line of fugitives, harangues, urges, threatens, entreats them. All the mouths which in the morning had shouted, "Long live the Emperor!" remain gaping; they hardly recognize him. The Prussian cavalry, newly arrived, dashes forwards, flies, hews, slashes, kills, exterminates. Horses lash out, the cannons flee; the soldiers of the artillery-train unharness the caissons and use the horses to make their escape; wagons overturned, with all four wheels in the air, block the road and occasion massacres. Men are crushed, trampled down, others walk over the dead and the living. Arms are lost. A dizzy multitude fills the roads, the paths, the bridges, the plains, the hills, the valleys, the woods, encumbered by this invasion of forty thousand men. Shouts, despair, knapsacks and guns flung among the wheat, passages forced at the point of the sword, no more comrades, no more officers, no more generals, an indescribable terror. Zieten putting France to the sword at its leisure. Lions converted into goats. Such was the flight.

At Genappe, an effort was made to wheel about, to present a battle front, to draw up in line. Lobau rallied three hundred men. The entrance to the village was barricaded, but at the first volley of Prussian canister, all took to flight again, and Lobau was made prisoner. That volley of grape-shot can be seen to-day imprinted on the ancient gable of a brick building on the right of the road at a few minutes' distance before you reach Genappe. The Prussians threw themselves into Genappe, furious, no doubt, that they were not more entirely the conquerors. The pursuit was stupendous. Blücher ordered extermination. Roguet had set the lugubrious example of threatening with death any French grenadier who should bring him a Prussian prisoner. Blücher surpassed Roguet. Duchesme, the general of the Young Guard, hemmed in at the doorway of an inn at Genappe, surrendered his sword to a huzzar of death, who took the sword and slew the prisoner. The victory was completed by the assassination of the vanquished. Let us inflict punishment, since we are writing history; old Blücher disgraced himself. This ferocity put the finishing touch to the disaster. The desperate rout traversed Genappe, traversed Quatre-Bras, traversed Gosselies, traversed Frasnes, traversed Charleroi, traversed Thuin, and only halted at the frontier. Alas! and who, then, was fleeing in that manner? The Grand Army.

This vertigo, this terror, this downfall into ruin of the highest bravery which ever astounded history,—is that causeless? No. The shadow of an enormous right is projected across Waterloo. It is the day of destiny. The force which is mightier than man produced that day. Hence the terrified wrinkle of those brows; hence all those great souls surrendering their swords. Those who had conquered Europe have fallen prone on the earth, with nothing left to say nor to do, feeling the present shadow of a terrible presence. *Hoc erat in fatis.* That day the perspective of the human race was changed. Waterloo is the hinge of the nineteenth century. The disappearance of the great man was necessary for the

advent of the great age, and he, who cannot be answered, took the responsibility on himself. The panic of heroes can be explained. In the battle of Waterloo there is something more than a cloud, there is something of the meteor.

At nightfall, in a meadow near Genappe, Bernard and Bertrand seized by the skirt of his coat and detained a man, haggard, pensive, sinister, gloomy, who, dragged to that point by the current of the rout, had just dismounted, had passed the bridle of his horse over his arm, and with wild eye was returning alone to Waterloo. It was Napoleon, the immense somnambulist of this dream which had crumbled, trying once more to advance.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE LAST SQUARE.

SEVERAL squares of the Guard, motionless amid this stream of the defeat, as rocks in running water, held their own until night. Night came, death also; they awaited that double shadow, and, invincible, allowed themselves to be surrounded with it. Each regiment, isolated from the rest, and having no bond with the army, now shattered in every part, died where it stood. They had taken up position for this final action, some on the heights of Rossomme, others on the plain of Mont-Saint-Jean. There, abandoned, vanquished, terrible, those gloomy squares endured their death-throes in formidable fashion. Ulm, Wagram, Jena, Friedland, died with them.

At twilight, towards nine o'clock in the evening, one of them was left at the foot of the plateau of Mont-Saint-Jean. In that fatal valley, at the foot of that declivity which the cuirassiers had ascended, now inundated by the masses of the English, under the converging fires of the victorious hostile cavalry, under a frightful density of projectiles, this square fought on. It was commanded

by an obscure officer named Cambronne. At each discharge, the square diminished and replied. It replied to the grape-shot with a fusilade, continually contracting its four walls. The fugitives pausing breathless for a moment in the distance, listened in the darkness to that gloomy and ever-diminishing thunder.

When this legion had been reduced to a handful, when nothing was left of their flag but a rag, when their guns, the ammunition all gone, were no longer anything but clubs, when the heap of corpses was larger than the group of survivors, there reigned among the conquerors, around those men dying so sublimely, a sort of sacred terror, and the English artillery, taking breath, became silent. This was a sort of respite. These combatants had around them something in the nature of a swarm of spectres, silhouettes of men on horseback, the black profiles of cannon, the white sky viewed through wheels and gun-carriages, the colossal death's-head, which the heroes saw constantly through the smoke, in the depths of the battle, advanced upon them and gazed at them. Through the shades of twilight they could hear the pieces being loaded; the matches all lighted, like the eyes of tigers at night formed a circle round their heads; all the lintstocks of the English batteries approached the cannons, and then, with emotion, holding the supreme moment suspended above these men, an English general, Colville according to some, Maitland according to others, shouted to them, "Surrender, brave Frenchmen!" Cambronne replied with an oath.

On hearing the insulting word, the English voice responded, "Fire!" The batteries flamed, the hill trembled, from all those brazen mouths belched a last terrible eruption of canister; a vast column of smoke, vaguely white in the light of the rising moon, rolled out, and when the smoke dispersed, there was no longer anything there. That formidable remnant had been annihilated; the Guard was dead. The four walls of the living redoubt lay prone, and hardly was there discernible, here and there, even a quiver in the bodies; it was thus that the French legions, greater than the Roman legions, expired

on Mont-Saint-Jean, on the soil watered with rain and blood, amid the gloomy grain on the spot where nowadays Joseph, who drives the post wagon from Nivelles, passes whistling, and cheerfully whipping up his horse at four o'clock in the morning.

---

## CHAPTER XV.

## QUOT LIBRAS IN DUCE ?

THE battle of Waterloo is an enigma. It is as obscure to those who won it as to those who lost it. For Napoleon it was a panic; Blücher sees nothing in it but fire; Wellington does not understand it. Look at the reports. The bulletins are confused, the commentaries involved. Some stammer, others lisp. Jomini divides the battle of Waterloo into four moments; Muffling cuts it up into three acts; Charras alone, though we hold another judgment than his on some points, seized with his haughty eye the characteristic outlines of that catastrophe of human genius in conflict with divine chance. All the other historians suffer from being somewhat dazzled, and they fumble about. It was a day of lightning brilliancy; in fact, a crumbling of the military monarchy which, to the vast stupefaction of kings, drew all the kingdoms after it—the fall of force, the rout of war.

In this event, stamped with superhuman necessity, the part played by men amounts to nothing.

If we take Waterloo from Wellington and Blücher, do we thereby deprive England and Germany of anything? No. Neither that illustrious England nor that august Germany enters into the problem of Waterloo. Thank Heaven, nations are great, without the lugubrious feats of the sword. Neither England, nor Germany, nor France is held in a scabbard. At this day when Waterloo is only a clashing of swords, above Blücher, Germany has Schiller; above Wellington, England has Byron. A vast dawn of ideas is the peculiarity of our century, and



in that dawn England and Germany have a magnificent radiance. They are majestic because they think. The high level which they contribute to civilization is intrinsic with them ; it proceeds from themselves and not from an accident. The aggrandizement which they have brought to the nineteenth century has not Waterloo as its source. It is only barbarous peoples who undergo rapid growth after a victory. That is the transient vanity of torrents swollen by a storm. Civilized people, especially in our day, are neither elevated nor abased by the good or bad fortune of a captain. Their specific gravity in the human family results from something more than a combat. Their honour, their dignity, their intelligence, their genius, are not numbers which those gamblers, heroes and conquerors, can stake in the lottery of battles. Often a battle is lost and progress is conquered. There is less glory and more liberty. The drum holds its peace ; reason speaks. It is a game in which he who loses wins. Let us, therefore, speak of Waterloo coldly from both sides. Let us render to chance that which is due to chance, and to God that which is due to God. What is Waterloo ? A victory ? No. The winning number in the lottery, won by Europe, paid by France.

It was not worth while to place a lion there.

Waterloo, moreover, is the strangest encounter in history. Napoleon and Wellington are not enemies ; they are opposites. Never did God, who delights in antitheses, make a more striking contrast, a more extraordinary comparison. On one side, precision, foresight, geometry, prudence, an assured retreat, reserves spared, with an obstinate coolness, an imperturbable method, strategy, which takes advantage of the ground, tactics, which preserve the equilibrium of battalions, carnage, executed according to rule, war regulated, watch in hand, nothing voluntarily left to chance, the ancient classic courage, absolute regularity ; on the other, intuition, divination, military strangeness, superhuman instinct, a flaming glance, an indescribable something which gazes like an eagle, and strikes like lightning, a

prodigious art in disdainful impetuosity, all the mysteries of a profound soul, association with destiny; the river, the plain, the forest, the hill, summoned, and to some extent forced to obey, the despot going even so far as to tyrannize over the field of battle; faith in a star mingled with strategic science, elevating but perturbing it. Wellington was the *Barème* of war; Napoleon was its Michael Angelo; and on this occasion, genius was vanquished by calculation. On both sides some one was expected. It was the exact calculator who succeeded. Napoleon was waiting for Grouchy; he did not come. Wellington expected Blücher; he came.

Wellington is classic war taking its revenge. Bonaparte, at his dawn, had encountered him in Italy, and beaten him superbly. The old owl had fled before the young vulture. The old tactics had been overthrown and disgraced. Who was that Corsican of six and twenty? What signified that splendid ignoramus, who, with everything against him, nothing in his favour, without provisions, without ammunition, without cannon, without shoes, almost without an army, with a mere handful of men against masses, hurled himself on Europe combined, and absurdly won impossible victories? Who was this novice in war with the effrontery of a luminary? The academic military school excommunicated him, and so it lost its footing; hence, the implacable rancour of the old Cæsarism against the new; of the regular sword against the flaming sword; and of the chess-board against genius. On the 18th of June, 1815, that rancour had the last word, and beneath Lodi, Montebello, Montenotte, Mantua, Arcola, it wrote: Waterloo. A triumph of the mediocrity which is sweet to the majority. Destiny consented to this irony. In this decline, Napoleon found Wurmser, the younger, again in front of him.

In fact, to get Wurmser, it sufficed to blanch the hair of Wellington.

Waterloo is a battle of the first order, won by a captain of the second.

What must be admired in the battle of Waterloo is

England; the English firmness, the English resolution, the English blood; the superb thing about England there, without offence, was herself. It was not her captain; it was her army.

Wellington, strangely ungrateful, declares in a letter to Lord Bathurst, that his army, the army which fought on the 18th of June, 1815, was a "detestable army." What does that sombre pile of bones buried beneath the trenches of Waterloo think of that?

England has been too modest to herself in the matter of Wellington. To make Wellington so great is to belittle England. Wellington is only a hero like many another. Those Scots Greys, those Horse Guards, those regiments of Maitland and of Mitchell, that infantry of Pack and Kempt, that cavalry of Ponsonby and Somerset, those Highlanders playing the pibroch under the shower of grape-shot, those battalions of Ryland, those utterly raw recruits, who hardly knew how to handle a musket holding their own against Essling's and Rivoli's old troops,—that is what was grand. Wellington was tenacious; that was his merit, and we are not seeking to lessen it; but the least of his foot-soldiers and of his cavalry would have been as solid as he. The iron soldier is worth as much as the Iron Duke. As for us, all our glorification goes to the English soldier, to the English army, to the English people. If trophy there be, it is to England that the trophy is due. The column of Waterloo would be more just if, instead of the figure of a man, it bore on high the statue of a people.

But this great England will be angry at what we are saying here. She still cherishes, after her own 1688 and our 1789, the feudal illusion. She believes in heredity and hierarchy. This people, surpassed by none in power and glory, regards itself as a nation, and not as a people. And as a people it willingly subordinates itself and takes a lord for its head. As a workman, it allows itself to be disdained; as a soldier, it allows itself to be flogged.

It will be remembered that at the battle of Inkermann

a sergeant who had, it appears, saved the British army, could not be mentioned by Lord Raglan, as the English military hierarchy does not permit any hero below the rank of an officer to be mentioned in despatches.

That which we admire above all, in an encounter of the nature of Waterloo, is the prodigious skill of chance. A night's rain, the wall of Hougomont, the hollow road of Ohain, Grouchy deaf to the cannon, Napoleon's guide deceiving him, Bulow's guide enlightening him,—the whole of this cataclysm is wonderfully conducted.

Let us say it plainly, it was more of a massacre than of a battle of Waterloo.

Of all pitched battles, Waterloo is the one which has the smallest front for such a number of combatants. Napoleon, three-quarters of a league; Wellington, half a league; seventy-two thousand combatants on each side. From this denseness came the carnage.

The following calculation has been made, and the following proportion established: Loss of men: at Austerlitz, French, fourteen per cent.; Russians, thirty per cent.; Austrians, forty-four per cent. At Wagram, French, thirteen per cent.; Austrians, fourteen. At the Moskowa, French, thirty-seven per cent.; Russians, forty-four. At Bautzen, French, thirteen per cent.; Russians and Prussians, fourteen. At Waterloo, French, fifty-six per cent.; the Allies, thirty-one. Total for Waterloo, forty-one per cent.; one hundred and forty-four thousand combatants; sixty thousand killed.

To-day, the field of Waterloo has the calmness which belongs to the earth, the impassive support of man, and it resembles all plains.

At night, moreover, a sort of visionary mist arises from it; and if a traveller strolls there if he listens, if he watches, if he dreams like Virgil in the mournful plains of Philippi, the hallucination of the catastrophe seizes him. The frightful 18th of June lives again; the false monumental hillock disappears, the lion disappears, the battlefield resumes its reality, lines of infantry undulate over the plain, furious gallops cross the horizon;

the startled dreamer beholds the flash of sabres, the gleam of bayonets, the flare of shells, the tremendous interchange of thunders; he hears, as it were, the death-rattle in the depths of a tomb, the vague clamour of the battle phantom; those shadows are grenadiers, those lights are cuirassiers; that skeleton Napoleon, that other skeleton is Wellington; all this no longer exists, and yet it clashes together and combats still; and the ravines are empurpled, and the trees quiver, and there is fury even in the clouds and in the shadows; all those terrible heights, Hougomont, Mont-Saint-Jean, Frischemont, Papelotte, Plancenoit, appear confusedly crowned with hosts of spectres engaged in exterminating each other.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### OUGHT WATERLOO TO BE APPLAUDED?

THERE exists a highly respectable liberal school which does not detest Waterloo. We do not belong to it. To us, Waterloo is but the stupefied date of liberty. That such an eagle should emerge from such an egg is certainly unexpected.

If one places one's self at the culminating point of view of the question, Waterloo is intentionally a counter-revolutionary victory. It is Europe against France; it is Petersburg, Berlin, and Vienna against Paris; it is the *statu quo* against the initiative; it is the 14th of July, 1789, attacked through the 20th of March, 1815; it is the monarchies clearing the decks in opposition to the indomitable French spirit of revolt. The final extinction of that vast people which had been in eruption for twenty-six years—such was the dream. The solidarity of the Brunswicks, the Nassaus, the Romanoffs, the Hohenzollerns, the Hapsburgs with the Bourbons. Waterloo bears divine right on its pillion. It is true, that the Empire having been despotic, the kingdom by the natural

reaction of things was forced to be liberal, and that a constitutional order was the unwilling result of Waterloo, to the great regret of the conquerors. It is because revolution cannot be really conquered, and that being providential and absolutely fatal, it is always cropping up afresh : before Waterloo, in Bonaparte, overthrowing the old thrones ; after Waterloo, in Louis XVIII. granting and conforming to the charter. Bonaparte places a postilion on the throne of Naples, and a sergeant on the throne of Sweden, employing inequality to demonstrate equality ; Louis XVIII. at Saint-Ouen countersigns the declaration of the rights of man. If you wish to gain an idea of what revolution is, call it Progress ; and if you wish to acquire an idea of the nature of progress, call it To-morrow. To-morrow fulfils its work irresistibly, and it is already fulfilling it to-day. It always attains its goal strangely. It employs Wellington to make of Foy, who was only a soldier, an orator. Foy falls at Hougomont and rises again in the tribune. Thus does progress proceed. There is no such thing as a bad tool for that workman. It bût adjusts to its divine work the man who has bestridden the Alps, and the old tottering invalid of Père Élysée. It makes use of the gouty man as well as of the conqueror ; of the conqueror without, of the gouty man within. Waterloo, by cutting short the demolition of European thrones by the sword, had no other effect than to cause the revolutionary work to be continued in another direction. The sabres have done their work ; it was the turn of the thinkers. The century that Waterloo was intended to arrest has pursued its march. That sinister victory was vanquished by liberty.

In short, and incontestably that which triumphed at Waterloo ; that which smiled behind Wellington ; that which brought him all the marshals' staffs of Europe, including, it is said, the staff of a marshal of France ; that which joyously trundled the barrows full of bones to erect the knoll of the lion ; that which triumphantly inscribed on that pedestal the date "*June 18, 1815*" ; that which encouraged Blücher, as he put the routed

army to the sword ; that which, from the heights of the plateau of Mont-Saint-Jean, hovered over France as over its prey, was the counter-revolution. It was the counter-revolution which murmured that hideous word "dis-memberment." On arriving in Paris, it beheld the crater close at hand ; it felt those ashes which scorched its feet, and it changed its mind ; it returned to the stammer of a charter.

Let us behold in Waterloo only that which is in Waterloo. Of intentional liberty there is none. The counter-revolution was involuntarily liberal, in the same manner as, by a corresponding phenomenon, Napoleon was involuntarily revolutionary. • On the 18th of June, 1815, the mounted Robespierre was thrown from his horse.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### RESTORATION OF DIVINE RIGHT.

WITH the fall of the dictatorship a whole European system crumbled away.

The Empire sank into a gloom which resembled that of the Roman world as it expired. Again we behold the abyss, as in the time of the barbarians ; only the barbarism of 1815, which must be called by its familiar name of the counter-revolution, was not long breathed, soon fell to panting, and halted short. The Empire was lamented,—let us acknowledge the fact,—and lamented by heroic eyes. If glory lies in the sword converted into a sceptre, the Empire had been glory itself. It had diffused over the earth all the light which tyranny can give—a dim light. We will say more ; an obscure light. Compared to the true day, it is night. This disappearance of night produces the effect of an eclipse.

Louis XVIII. re-entered Paris. The circling dances of the 8th of July effaced the enthusiasms of the 20th of March. The Corsican became the antitheses of the Bear-

nese. The flag on the dome of the Tuileries was white. The exile was restored. Hartwell's pine table took its place in front of the fleur-de-lys-strewn throne of Louis XIV. Bouvines and Fontenoy were mentioned as though they had taken place on the preceding day, Austerlitz having become antiquated. The altar and the throne fraternized majestically. One of the most indubitable forms of the welfare of society in the nineteenth century was established over France and over the continent. Europe adopted the white cockade. Trestaillon was celebrated. The motto *non pluribus impar* reappeared on the stone rays representing a sun upon the front of the barracks on the Quai d'Orsay. Where there had been an Imperial Guard, there was now a red household. The Arc du Carrousel, all laden with badly borne victories, thrown out of its element among these novelties, a little ashamed, it may be, of Marengo and Arcola, extricated itself from its predicament with the statue of the Duc d'Angoulême. The cemetery of the Madeleine, a terrible pauper's grave in 1793, was covered with jasper and marble, since the bones of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette mingled in that dust.

In the moat of Vincennes a tomb sprang from the earth, recalling the fact that the Duc d'Enghien had perished in the very month when Napoleon was crowned. Pope Pius VII., who had performed the coronation very near this death, tranquilly bestowed his blessing on the fall as he had bestowed it on the elevation. At Schoenbrunn there was a little shadow, aged four, whom it was seditious to call the King of Rome. And these things took place, and the kings resumed their thrones, and the master of Europe was put in a cage, and the old *régime* became the new *régime*, and all the shadows and all the light of the earth changed place, because, on the afternoon of a certain summer's day, a shepherd said to a Prussian in the forest, "Go this way, and not that!"

This 1815 was a sort of melancholy April. Ancient unhealthy and poisonous realities were covered with new appearances. A lie wedded 1789; the right divine



was masked under a charter ; fictions became constitutional ; prejudices, superstitions, and mental reservations, with Article 14 in the heart, were varnished over with liberalism. It was the serpent's change of skin.

Man had been aggrandized and lessened by Napoleon. Under this reign of splendid materialism, the ideal had received the strange name of ideology ! It is a grave imprudence in a great man to turn the future into derision. The populace, however, that food for cannon which is so fond of the gunner, sought him with its glance. Where is he ? What is he doing ? " Napoleon is dead," said a passer-by to a veteran of Marengo and Waterloo. " He dead ! " cried the soldier ; " you don't know him." Imagination distrusted this man, even when overthrown. The depths of Europe were full of darkness after Waterloo. Something enormous remained long empty through Napoleon's disappearance.

The kings placed themselves in this void. Ancient Europe profited by it to undertake reforms. There was a Holy Alliance ; *Belle-Alliance*, Beautiful Alliance, the fatal field of Waterloo had said beforehand.

In the presence of this old Europe reconstructed, the features of a new France were sketched in. The future, which the Emperor had rallied, made its entry. On its brow it bore the star, Liberty. The ardent eyes of the youthful generations were turned on it. Strange to say, people were, at one and the same time, in love with the future, Liberty, and the past, Napoleon. Defeat had rendered the vanquished greater. Bonaparte fallen seemed more lofty than Napoleon erect. Those who had triumphed were alarmed. England had him guarded by Hudson Lowe, and France had him watched by Montchenu. His folded arms became a source of anxiety to thrones. Alexander christened him " his nightmare." This terror was the result of the amount of revolution which was contained in him. That is what explains and excuses Bonapartist liberalism. This phantom caused the old world to tremble. The kings

reigned, but ill at their ease, with the rock of Saint Helena on the horizon.

While Napoleon was dying at Longwood, the sixty thousand men who had fallen on the field of Waterloo were quietly rotting, and something of their peace was shed abroad over the world. The Congress of Vienna made the treaties in 1815, and Europe called this the Restoration.

This is what Waterloo was.

But what matters it all to the Infinite? all that tempest, all that cloud, that war, then that peace? All that darkness did not trouble for a moment the light of that mighty Eye before which a grub skipping from one blade of grass to another equals the eagle soaring from belfry to belfry on the towers of Nôtre Dame.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE BATTLE-FIELD BY NIGHT.

BUT to return—it is a necessity to the story—to that fatal battle-field.

On the 18th of June the moon was bright. Its light favoured Blücher's ferocious pursuit, betrayed the traces of the fugitives, delivered up that disastrous mass to the eager Prussian cavalry, and aided the massacre. Such tragic favours of the night do occur sometimes during catastrophes.

After the last cannon-shot had been fired, the plain of Mont-Saint-Jean remained deserted.

The English occupied the encampment of the French; it is the usual sign of victory to sleep in the bed of the vanquished. They established their bivouac beyond Rossomme. The Prussians followed the fugitives. Wellington went to the village of Waterloo to draw up his report to Lord Bathurst.

If ever the *sic vos non vobis* was applicable, it certainly

is to that village of Waterloo. Waterloo took no part, and lay half a league from the scene of action. Mont-Saint-Jean was cannonaded, Hougomont was burned, La Haie-Sainte was taken by assault, Papelotte was burned, Plancenoit was burned, La Belle-Alliance beheld the embrace of the two conquerors; these names are hardly known, and Waterloo, which worked not in the battle, bears off all the honour.

We are not of those who flatter war; when the occasion presents itself, we tell the truth about it. War has frightful beauties which we have not concealed; it has also, we acknowledge, some ugly features. One of the most surprising is the prompt stripping of the bodies of the dead after the victory. The dawn which follows a battle always rises on naked corpses.

Who does this? Who thus sullies the triumph? What hideous, furtive hand is that which is slipped into the pocket of victory? What villains are they who ply their trade in the rear of glory? Some philosophers—Voltaire among the number—affirm that it is precisely those persons who have made the glory. It is the same men, they say; there is no relief corps; those who are erect pillage those who are prone on the earth. The hero of the day is the vampire of the night. One has assuredly the right, after all, to strip a corpse a bit when one is the author of that corpse. We do not think so, however. It seems to us impossible that the same hand should pluck laurels and purloin the shoes from a dead man.

One thing is certain, which is, that generally after conquerors follow thieves. But let us leave the soldier, especially the contemporary soldier, out of the question.

Every army has a rear-guard, and it is that which must be blamed. Bat-like creatures, half brigands and lackeys; all the sorts of vespertillos that that twilight called war engenders; wearers of uniforms, who take no part in the fighting; malingerers; formidable invalids; interloping sutlers, trotting along in little carts, sometimes accompanied by their wives, and stealing things which they sell again; beggars offering themselves as guides

to officers ; soldiers' servants ; marauders ; armies on the march in days gone by,—we are not speaking of the present,—dragged all this behind them, so that in the special language they are called "stragglers." No army, no nation, was responsible for those beings ; they spoke Italian and followed the Germans, then spoke French and followed the English. It was by one of these wretches, a Spanish straggler who spoke French, that the Marquis of Fervacques, deceived by his Picard accent, and taking him for one of our own men, was traitorously slain and robbed on the battle-field itself, in the course of the night which followed the victory of Cerisoles. The detestable maxim, *Live on the enemy !* produced this leprosy, which a strict discipline alone could cure. There are reputations which are deceptive ; one does not always know why certain generals, great in other directions, have been so popular. Turenne was adored by his soldiers because he tolerated pillage ; evil permitted constitutes part of goodness. Turenne was so good that he allowed the Palatinate to be destroyed by sword and fire. The marauders in the train of an army were more or less in number, according as the chief was more or less severe. Hoche and Marceau had no stragglers ; Wellington had few, and we do him the justice to mention it.

Nevertheless, on the night from the 18th to the 19th of June, the dead were stripped. Wellington was strict ; he gave orders that any one caught in the act should be shot ; but rapine is tenacious. The marauders stole in one corner of the battle-field while others were being shot in another.

Towards midnight, a man was prowling about, or rather climbing in the direction of the hollow road of Ohain. To all appearance he was one of those whom we have just described—neither English nor French, neither peasant nor soldier, less a man than a ghoul attracted by the scent of the dead bodies, having theft for his victory, and come to plunder Waterloo. He was clad in a blouse that was something like a great coat ; he was anxious and daring ;

he walked forwards and gazed behind him. Who was this man? The night probably knew more of him than the day. He had no sack, but evidently he had large pockets under his coat. From time to time he halted, scrutinized the plain around him as though to see whether he was observed, bent over abruptly, disturbed something silent and motionless on the ground, then rose and stepped away. His sliding motion, his attitudes, his mysterious and rapid gestures, caused him to resemble those twilight larvæ which haunt ruins, and which ancient Norman legends call the Alleurs.

Certain nocturnal wading birds produce these silhouettes among the marshes.

A glance capable of piercing all that mist deeply would have perceived at some distance a sort of vivandière's cart, with a sort of tarpaulin, harnessed to a famished nag which was cropping the nettles across its bit as it halted, hidden, as it were, behind the hovel which adjoins the highway to Nivelles, at the angle of the road from Mont-Saint-Jean to Braine-l'Alleud; and in the wagon, a sort of woman seated on coffers and packages. Perhaps there was some connection between that wagon and that prowler.

There was not a cloud in the sky. What matters it if the earth be red! the moon remains white: that is the indifference of nature. In the fields, branches of trees broken by grape-shot, but not fallen, upheld by their bark, swayed gently in the breeze of night. A breath, almost a respiration, shook the brambles. Quivers which resembled the departure of souls ran through the grass.

In the distance the coming and going of patrols and the general rounds of the English camp were audible.

Hougomont and La Haie-Sainte continued to burn, forming, one in the west, the other in the east, two great flames which were joined by the cordon of bivouac fires of the English, like a necklace of rubies with two carbuncles at the extremities, as they extended in an immense semicircle over the hills along the horizon.

We have described the catastrophe of the Ohain road.

The heart is terrified at the thought of what that death must have been to so many brave men.

If there is anything terrible, if there exists a reality which surpasses dreams, it is this: to live, to see the sun; to be in full possession of manly vigour; to have health and joy; to laugh valiantly; to rush towards a glory which one sees dazzling in front of one; to feel in one's breast lungs which breathe, a heart which beats, a will which reasons; to speak, think, hope, love; to have a mother, to have a wife, to have children; to have the light—and all at once, in the space of a shout, to sink into an abyss; to fall, to roll, to crush, to be crushed; to see ears of wheat, flowers, leaves, branches; not to be able to catch hold of anything; to feel one's sword useless, men beneath one, horses on top of one; to struggle in vain, since one's bones have been broken by some kick in the darkness; to feel a heel on your eyes; to bite horses' shoes in one's rage; to stifle, to yell, to writhe; to be beneath, and to say to one's self, "A moment ago I was a living man!"

At the spot where this lamentable disaster occurred all was now silence. The hollow way was encumbered with horses and riders, inextricably heaped up. There was no longer any slope, for the corpses had levelled the road with the plain, and reached the top like a well-filled measure of barley. A pile of dead bodies above, a river of blood below—such was that road on the evening of the 18th of June, 1815. The blood ran even to the Nivelles highway, and there overflowed in a large pool at a spot which is still pointed out.

It will be remembered that it was at the opposite point, in the direction of the Genappe road, that the destruction of the cuirassiers had taken place. The depth of the corpses was proportioned to the depth of the hollow road. Towards the middle, at the point where it became level, where Delort's division had passed, the layer of dead was thinner.

The nocturnal prowler whom we have just shown to the reader was going in that direction. He was searching

that vast tomb. He gazed about. He passed the dead in some sort of hideous review. He walked with his feet in the blood.

All at once he stopped.

A few paces in front of him, in the hollow road, at the point where the pile of dead came to an end, an open hand, illumined by the moon, projected from beneath that heap of men. That hand had on its finger something sparkling, which was a ring of gold.

The man bent down, and when he rose there was no longer a ring on the finger.

He did not exactly rise; he remained in a savage and shy attitude, with his back turned to the heap of dead, scanning the horizon on his knees, with the whole upper portion of his body supported on his two forefingers, which rested on the earth, and his head peering above the edge of the hollow road. The jackal's four paws suit some actions.

Then coming to a decision, he rose to his feet.

At that moment, he gave a terrible start. He felt some one clutch him from behind.

He turned, and found it was the open hand which had closed, and had seized the skirt of his coat.

An honest man would have been frightened; this man began laughing.

"Hullo!" said he, "it's only the dead man. I prefer a ghost to a gendarme."

The hand relaxed its hold. Effort is quickly exhausted in the tomb.

"Can this dead man be alive?" said the prowler. "Let me have a look."

He bent down again, removed obstacles in his way, seized the hand, grasped the arm, freed the head, pulled out the body, and in a few moments later he was dragging the lifeless, or at least unconscious, man through the shadows of hollow road. He was a cuirassier, an officer, and even an officer of considerable rank; a large gold epaulette peeped from beneath the cuirass; this officer no longer possessed a helmet. A furious

sword-cut had scarred his face, which was covered with blood.

He did not appear, however, to have any broken limbs, and, by some happy chance, if that word is permissible here, the dead had been vaulted above him in such a manner as to save him from being crushed. His eyes were closed.

On his cuirass he wore the silver cross of the Legion of Honour.

The prowler tore off this cross, which disappeared into one of the gulfs which he had under his blouse.

Then he felt the officer's fob, discovered a watch there, and took possession of it. Next he searched his waistcoat, found a purse and pocketed it. •

When he had arrived at this stage of succour which he was administering to the dying man, the officer opened his eyes.

"Thanks," he said feebly.

The roughness of the man's movements, the freshness of the night, the air which he could inhale freely, had roused him from his lethargy.

The prowler made no reply. He raised his head. A sound of footsteps was audible in the plain; some patrol was probably approaching.

The officer murmured, for the agony of death was still in his voice:—

"Who won the battle?"

"The English," answered the prowler.

The officer continued:—

"Look in my pockets; you will find a watch and a purse. Take them."

Though this was already done the prowler did what was requested, and said:—

"There is nothing there."

"I have been robbed," continued the officer; "I am sorry for that. You ought to have had them."

The steps of the patrol became more and more distinct.

"Some one is coming," said the prowler, taking his departure.



The officer raised his arm feebly, and detained him.

"You have saved my life. Who are you?"

The marauder answered rapidly, and in a low voice:—

"Like yourself, I belonged to the French army. I must leave you. If they were to catch me, they would shoot me. I have saved your life. Now get out of the scrape yourself."

"What is your rank?"

"Sergeant."

"Your name?"

"Thénardier."

"I shall not forget your name," said the officer; "and do you remember mine. It is Pontmercy."

## BOOK II.

### CHAPTER I.

NO. 24,601 BECOMES 9,430.

JEAN VALJEAN was recaptured. As our readers will probably thank us for passing rapidly over painful details, we confine ourselves to the quotation of two paragraphs published by the newspapers of the day, a few months after the occurrence of the surprising events at M——. These articles are rather summary, but it must be remembered that no *Gazette des Tribunaux* existed at that period. The first we take from the *Drapeau Blanc*, dated July 25, 1823.

“A bailiwick of the Pas de Calais has just been the scene of an uncommon event. A man, who was a stranger to the department and called M. Madeleine, had some years previously revived by a new process an old local trade, the manufacture of jet and black beads. He made his own fortune, and, let us add, that of the bailiwick, and in acknowledgment of his services he was appointed Mayor. The police discovered that M. Madeleine was no other than an ex-convict, who had broken his ban, condemned in 1796 for robbery, of the name of Jean Valjean. He has been sent back to the Bagne. It appears that prior to his arrest he succeeded in withdrawing from M. Lafitte's a sum of more than half a million, which he had banked there, and which it is said that he had honestly

## LES MISÉRABLES.

acquired by his trade. Since his return to Toulon futile efforts have been made to discover where this amount is concealed."

The second article, which is rather more detailed, is extracted from the *Journal de Paris* of the same date :—

"An ex-convict of the name of Jean Valjean has just been tried at the Var assizes, under circumstances which attract attention. This villain had succeeded in deceiving the vigilance of the police, and had behaved so cleverly as to be made Mayor of one of our small towns in the north, where he established a rather considerable trade. He was at length unmasked, and arrested through the indefatigable zeal of the public authorities. He had, as his concubine, a girl of the town, who died of a fit at the moment of his arrest. This scoundrel, who is endowed with Herculean strength, managed to escape, but three or four days later the police again captured him in Paris, at the moment when he was entering one of those small coaches which run from the capital to the village of Montfermeil (Seine et Oise). It is said that he took advantage of these three or four days of liberty to withdraw from one of our chief bankers an amount estimated at six or seven hundred thousand francs. According to the indictment he buried it at some spot only known to himself, and it has not been found ; but, however this may be, this Jean Valjean has just been tried at Var assizes for a highway robbery, committed with violence some eight years ago upon one of those honest lads, who, as the patriarch of Ferney has said in immortal verse,—

'—De Savoie arrivent tous les ans  
Et dont la main légèrement essuie  
Ces longs canaux engorgés par la suie.'

This bandit made no defence, but it was proved by the skilful and eloquent organ of public justice that Jean Valjean was a member of a band of robbers in the south. Consequently Valjean was found guilty and sentenced to

death. The criminal refused to appeal to the Court of Cassation, but the King, in his inexhaustible mercy, deigned to commute his sentence into penal servitude for life. Jean Valjean was immediately removed to the galleys at Toulon."

It will not be forgotten that Jean Valjean had displayed religious tendencies at M——, and some of the papers, among them the *Constitutionnel*, regarded this commutation as a triumph of the Priest party. Jean Valjean changed his number at Toulon, and was known as 9,430. Let us state here once and for all that with M. Madeleine the prosperity of M—— disappeared: all he had foreseen in his night of hesitation and fever was realized; his absence was in truth the absence of the soul. After his fall there took place at M—— that selfish division of great fallen existences, that fatal break up of flourishing things, which is daily accomplished obscurely in the human community, and which history has only noticed once because it occurred after the death of Alexander. Lieutenants crown themselves kings; overseers suddenly became manufacturers, and envious rivalries sprang up. M. Madeleine's large workshops were shut up; the buildings fell into a ruinous condition, and the artisans dispersed, some leaving the town, others the trade. All was henceforth done on a small scale instead of a large one, for lucre instead of the public welfare. There was no centre, but on all sides violent competition. M. Madeleine had commanded and directed everything. When he fell, a spirit of contest succeeded that of organization, bitterness succeeded cordiality, and mutual hatred the good-will of the common founder. The threads tied by M. Madeleine became knotted and broken; the process was falsified, the articles became worse, and confidence was destroyed; the outlets diminished, and there were fewer orders; wages fell, there were stoppages, and lastly came bankruptcy.

The State itself perceived that some one had been crushed somewhere, for less than four years after the

sentence of the court identifying M. Madeleine and Jean Valjean to the profit of the galleys, the cost of collecting the taxes was doubled in the bailiwick of M——. M. de Villèle made a remark to that effect in the House in February, 1827.

## CHAPTER II.

### TWO LINES OF A DOUBTFUL ORIGIN.

BEFORE going further we will enter into some details about a strange fact that occurred at about the same period at Montfermeil, and which may possibly possess some coincidence with certain police conjectures. There is at Montfermeil a very old superstition, which is the more curious and valuable because a popular superstition in the neighbourhood of Paris is like an aloe-tree in Siberia. We are of those who respect everything which is in the condition of a rare plant. This, then, is the Montfermeil superstition : it is believed that from time immemorial the fiend has selected the forest as the spot where he buries his treasure. Old women declare that it is not rare to meet at nightfall, and in remote parts of the forest, a black man resembling a wagoner or wood-cutter, dressed in wooden shoes and canvas trousers and blouse, and recognizable from the fact that he has on his head two enormous horns in place of cap or hat. This man is usually engaged in digging a hole, and there are three modes of action in the event of meeting him. The first is to go up to the man and address him ; in that case you perceive that he is simply a peasant, that he appears black because it is twilight, that he is not digging a hole, but cutting grass for his kine, and that what you had taken for horns is nothing but a dung-fork he carries on his back, whose prongs seem to grow out of his head. You go home and die within the week. The second plan is to watch him, wait till he has dug his hole and filled it up and gone away ; then you run up to the hole and take

out the treasure which the black man had necessarily deposited in it. In this case you die within the month. The last way is not to speak to the black man at all, not to look at him, but run away at full speed, and you die within the year.

All three modes have their inconveniences, but the second, which offers at any rate some advantages, among others that of possessing a treasure, if only for a month, is the one most generally adopted. Bold men whom chances tempt have consequently, so it is declared, frequently reopened the hole dug by the black man, and robbed the demon. It seems, however, as if the profits are small ; at any rate, if we may believe tradition, and particularly and especially two enigmatical lines in dog Latin, which a wicked Norman monk, a bit of a sorcerer, and of the name of Tryphon, left on the subject. This Tryphon lies at St. George's Abbey at Bocheville near Rouen, and frogs are born on his tomb. A man makes enormous exertions, then, for the holes are generally very deep : he perspires, works the whole night through (for the operation must be carried out at night), gets a wet shirt, burns out his candle, breaks his pick, and when he at last reaches the bottom of the hole and lays his hand on the treasure, what does he find ? what is the fiend's treasure ? a sou, at times a crown-piece, a stone, a skeleton, a bleeding corpse, or a spectre folded up like a sheet of paper in a pocket-book, and sometimes nothing at all ! This appears to be revealed to the searchers by Tryphon's lines,

“ Fodit et in fossâ thesauros condit opacâ,  
As, nummos, lapides, cadaver, simulacra, nihilque.”

It seems that in our days there are also found sometimes a gunpowder flask and balls, or an old pack of greasy, dirty cards which have evidently been used by the fiends. Tryphon does not record these two facts, because he lived in the 12th century, and it does not appear that the fiend had the sense to invent gunpowder before Roger Bacon, or playing cards before Charles VI. If you play with the

cards you are safe to lose all you possess, while the gunpowder displays the peculiarity of making your gun burst in your face.

A very short time after the period when it occurred to the police that Jean Valjean during his four days of liberty had been prowling round Montfermeil, it was noticed in the same village that a certain old roadmender of the name of Boulatruelle was "up to his tricks" in the forest. It was believed generally that this Boulatruelle had been to the galleys; he was to some extent under police inspection, and as he could not find work anywhere, the administration employed him at a low wage as mender of the cross road from Gagny to Lagny. This Boulatruelle was a man looked on askance by the villagers, as he was too respectful, too humble, ready to doff his cap to everybody, trembling and fawning before the gendarmes, and probably allied with the robbers, so it was said, and suspected of lurking about the roads after dark. The only thing in his favour was that he was a drunkard.

This is what people fancied that they noticed. For some time past Boulatruelle had left work at an early hour, and gone into the forest with his pick-axe. He was met toward evening in the most desolate clearings, in the wildest thickets, apparently seeking something, and at times digging holes. The old women who passed at first took him for Beelzebub, and when they recognized Boulatruelle did not feel at all more easy in mind. Such meetings greatly annoyed Boulatruelle, and hence it was plain that he tried to hide himself, and that there was a mystery in what he was doing. It was said in the village, "It is clear that the fiend has made his appearance. Boulatruelle saw him, and is seeking; well, he is cunning enough to pocket Lucifer's treasure." The Voltairians added: "Will Boulatruelle cheat the demon or the demon cheat Boulatruelle?" while the old women crossed themselves repeatedly. Boulatruelle, however, discontinued his forest rambles, and regularly resumed his work, whereupon something else was talked about. Some persons,

however, remained curious, thinking that there was probably in the affair, not the fabulous treasure of the legend, but something more palpable and tangible than the fiend's bank-notes, and that the road-mender had doubtless found out half the secret. The most puzzled were the schoolmaster and Thénardier the publican, who was everybody's friend, and had not disdained an intimacy with Boulatruelle.

"He has been to the galleys," Thénardier would say. "Well, good gracious, we do not know who is there, or who may go there."

One evening the schoolmaster declared that in other times the authorities would have inquired what Boulatruelle was about in the wood, and that he would have been obliged to speak; they would have employed torture if necessary, and Boulatruelle would not have resisted the ordeal of water, for instance. "Let us give him the ordeal of wine," said Thénardier. They set to work, and Boulatruelle drank enormously, but held his tongue. He combined, with admirable tact and in magisterial proportions, the thirst of a sponge with the discretion of a judge. Still, by returning to the charge, and by putting together the few obscure words that escaped him, this is what Thénardier and the schoolmaster fancied that they could make out.

Boulatruelle, on going to work at daybreak one morning, was surprised at seeing under a bush a spade and a pick, which "looked as if they were hidden;" still he fancied that they belonged to Father Six-fours, the water-carrier, and did not think any more of the matter. On the evening of the same day, however, he saw, without being himself seen, as he was hidden behind a tree, "an individual who did not belong to these parts, and whom he, Boulatruelle, knew," proceeding toward the most retired part of the wood. This Thénardier translated as "a comrade at the galleys," but Boulatruelle obstinately refused to mention his name. This individual was carrying a bundle, something square, like a box or small chest. Boulatruelle was surprised, but it was not till some ten



minutes later that the idea of following the "individual" occurred to him. But it was too late, the individual was already among the trees, night had fallen, and Boulatruelle was unable to catch him up. Then he resolved to watch the skirt of the wood, and the moon was shining. Boulatruelle, some two or three hours after, saw his individual come out of the wood, not carrying the box, however, but a spade and pick. Boulatruelle allowed him to pass, and did not address him, for he said to himself that the other man was thrice as strong as he, and being armed with a pick would probably smash him on recognizing him and finding himself recognized; a touching effusion on the part of two old comrades who suddenly meet. But the spade and pick were a ray of light for Boulatruelle; he hurried to the bush at daybreak, and no longer found them there. From this he concluded that his individual, on entering the wood, had dug a hole with his pick, buried his box in it, and then covered it up with the spade. Now, as the box was too small to contain a corpse, it must contain money, and hence his researches. Boulatruelle explored the forest in all directions, and especially at spots where the ground seemed to have been recently turned up, but it was all of no use, he discovered nothing. Nobody in Montfermeil thought any more of the matter, except some worthy gossips who said, "You may be sure that the road-mender did not take all that trouble for nothing; it is certain that the fiend has been here."

### CHAPTER III.

#### ON BOARD THE "ORION."

TOWARD the close of Oct., in the same year, 1823, the inhabitants of Toulon saw a vessel enter their port which had sustained some damage in a heavy storm. It was the *Orion*, which at a later date was employed at Brest as a training school, but now formed part of the Mediterranean

fleet. This vessel, battered as it was, for the sea had ill-treated it, produced an effect on entering the roads. It displayed some flag which obtained it the regulation salute of eleven guns, to which it replied round for round—a total of two-and-twenty rounds.

The year 1823 was what the Restoration called "the epoch of the Spanish war." This war contained many events in one, and many singularities. It was a great family affair for the House of Bourbon; the French branch succouring and protecting the Madrid branch, that is to say, proving its majority; an apparent return to national traditions, complicated by servitude and subjection to the northern cabinets. The Duc d'Angoulême, surnamed by the liberal papers the "hero of Andujar," repressing in a triumphal attitude, which was somewhat spoiled by his peaceful looks, the old and very real terrorism of the Holy office, which was contending with the chimerical terrorism of the liberals; the sans-culottes resuscitated to the great alarm of dowagers, under the name of *Descamisados*; monarchy offering an obstacle to the progress which it termed anarchy; the theories of '89 suddenly interrupted in their sap; a European check given to the French idea which was making its voyage round the world, by the side of the Generalissimo son of France. The Prince de Carignan, afterwards Charles Albert, enrolling himself as a volunteer with the red wool epaulettes of a grenadier in this crusade of the kings against the peoples; the soldiers of the empire taking the field again, after eight years' rest, aged, sad, and wearing the white cockade; the tri-colour waved in a foreign country by an heroic handful of Frenchmen, as the white flag had been at Coblenz thirty years previously; monks mingled with the French troopers; the spirit of liberty and novelty set right by bayonets; principles checkmated by artillery; France undoing by her arms what she had done by her mind; the enemy's leaders sold; the soldiers hesitating; towns besieged by millions; no military perils, and yet possible explosions, as in every mine which is surprised and invaded; dis-

grace for a few persons, and glory for none—such was this war, brought about by princes who descended from Louis XIV., and conducted by generals who issued from Napoleon. It had the sad fate of recalling neither the great war nor the great policy.

Some engagements were serious; the passage of the Trocadero, for instance, was a brilliant military achievement, but on the whole, we repeat, the trumpets of that war have a cracked sound, the whole affair was suspicious, and history agrees with France in the difficulty of accepting this false triumph. It seemed certain that certain Spanish officers ordered to resist, yielded too easily, and the idea of corruption was evolved from the victory; it seemed as if generals rather than battles had been gained, and the victorious soldier returned home humiliated. It was, in truth, a diminishing war, and the words "Bank of France" could be read in the folds of the flag. The soldiers of the war of 1808, on whom the ruins of Saragossa fell so formidably, frowned in 1823 at the easy opening of citadel gates, and began regretting Palafox. It is the humour of France to prefer a Rostopchin before her rather than a Ballesteros. From a more serious point of view, on which it is right to dwell here, this war, which offended the military spirit in France, humiliated the democratic spirit. It was undertaken on behalf of serfdom: in this campaign the object of the French soldier, who was the son of democracy, was to bow others under the yoke. This was a hideous mistake, for France has the mission of arousing the soul of nations, and not stifling it. Since 1792 all the revolutions of Europe have been the French Revolution, and liberty radiates from France. He must be a blind man who does not recognize this; and it was Bonaparte who said so.

The war of 1823, an attempt upon the generous Spanish nation, was therefore at the same time an attack on the French Revolution. It was France that committed this monstrous act of violence; for, with the exception of wars of liberation, all that armies do they do by force, as the words "passive obedience" indicate. An army is a

strange masterpiece of combination, in which strength results from an enormous amount of impotence. In this way can we explain war carried on by humanity against humanity, in spite of humanity. The war of 1823 was fatal to the Bourbons; they regarded it as a triumph, for they did not see what danger there is in killing an idea by a countersign. In their simplicity they committed the mistake of introducing into this establishment the immense weakness of a crime as an element of strength; the spirit of ambuscading entered into their policy, and 1830 germinated in 1823. The Spanish campaign became in their councils an argument for oppression, and the government by right divine. France, having re-established *el rey neto* in Spain, could establish the absolute king at home. They fell into the formidable error of taking the obedience of the soldier for the consent of the nation, and such a confidence is the destruction of thrones. Men must neither go to sleep in the shadow of a manchineal tree, nor in that of an army.

Let us now return to the *Orion*. During the operations of the army commanded by the Prince generalissimo a squadron cruised in the Mediterranean, to which, as we said, the *Orion* belonged, and was driven into Toulon roads to repair damages.

This vessel had long been in a sickly state. During previous voyages barnacles had collected on her hull to such an extent that she lost half her speed; she had been taken into dry dock the year previous to scrape off these barnacles, and then put to sea again. But this scraping had injured the bolts, and when off the Balearic Isles she sprang a leak, and took in water, as vessels were not coppered in those days. A violent equinoctial gale supervened, which injured her larboard bows and destroyed the fore chains. In consequence of this damage the *Orion* put into Toulon, and anchored near the arsenal for repairs. The hull was uninjured, but a few planks had been unnailed here and there to let air in, as is usually the case.

One morning the crowd witnessed an accident. The crew were engaged in bending the sails, and the top-man,

who had hold of the upper corner of the main-top-sail, lost his balance. He was seen to totter, the crowd on the arsenal quay uttered a cry, his head dragged him downwards, and he turned round the yard, with his hands stretched down to the water, but he caught hold of the foot-rope as he passed it, first with one hand then with the other, and remained hanging from it. The sea was below him at a dizzy depth, and the shock of his fall had given the foot-rope a violent, swinging movement. The man swung at the end of the rope like a stone in a sling. To go to his assistance would be running a frightful risk, and not one of the sailors, all coast fishermen lately called in for duty, dared to venture it. Still the unhappy top-man was growing tired: his agony could not be seen in his face, but his exhaustion could be distinguished in all his limbs, and his arms were awfully dragged. Any effort he made to raise himself only caused the foot-rope to oscillate the more, and he did not cry out, for fear of exhausting his strength. The minute was close at hand when he must leave go the rope, and every now and then all heads were turned away not to see it happen. There are moments in which a rope, a pole, the branch of a tree, is life itself, and it is a fearful thing to see a living being leave go of it and fall like ripe fruit. All at once a man could be seen climbing up the shrouds with the agility of a tiger-cat. As he was dressed in red this man was a convict; as he wore a green cap he was a convict for life. On reaching the top a puff of wind blew away his cap and displayed a white head; hence he was not a young man.

A convict, employed on board with a gang, had in fact at once run up to the officer of the watch, and in the midst of the trouble and confusion, while all the sailors trembled and recoiled, asked permission to risk his life in saving the top-man. At a nod of assent from the officer he broke with one blow of a hammer the chain riveted to his ankle, took up a rope, and darted up the shrouds. No one noticed at the moment with what ease this chain was broken; and the fact was not remembered till afterwards. In a second he was upon the yard, where he stood for a

little while as if looking round him. These seconds, during which the wind swung the top-man at the end of a thread, seemed ages to the persons who were looking at him. At length the convict raised his eyes to heaven and advanced a step. The crowd breathed again, as they saw him run along the yard. On reaching the end he fastened to it the rope he had brought with him, let it hang down, and then began going down it hand over hand. This produced a feeling of indescribable agony, for, instead of one man hanging over the gulf, there were now two. He resembled a spider going to seize a fly ; but, in this case, the spider brought life and not death. Ten thousand eyes were fixed on the group : not a cry, not a word could be heard ; every mouth held its breath, as if afraid of increasing in the slightest degree the wind that shook the two wretched men. The convict fastened the sailor securely with the rope to which he clung with one hand, while he worked with the other. At length he was seen to climb back to the yard and haul the sailor up : he supported him there for a moment to let him regain his strength, then took him in his arms and carried him along the yard to the cap, and thence to the top, where he left him with his comrades. The crowd applauded him, several old sergeants of the chain-gang had tears in their eyes, and every voice could be heard shouting with a species of frenzy, " Pardon for that man ! "

The convict, however, began going down again immediately to rejoin his gang. All eyes followed him, and at one moment the spectators felt afraid, for they fancied they could see him hesitate and totter, either through fatigue or dizziness ; all at once the crowd uttered a terrible cry—the convict had fallen into the sea. The fall was a dangerous one, for the *Algésiras* frigate was anchored near the *Orion*, and the poor galley slave had fallen between the two ships, and might be sucked under one of them. Four men hastily got into a boat, and the crowd encouraged them, for all felt anxious again. The man did not come to the surface again, and disappeared in the sea without making a ripple just as

if he had fallen into a barrel of oil. They dragged for him, but in vain ; they continued the search till night-fall, but his body was not even found. The next day the Toulon paper printed the following lines :—" Nov. 17, 1823.—Yesterday a convict, one of a gang on board the *Orion*, fell into the sea and was drowned, as he was returning from assisting a sailor. His body has not been found, and is supposed to be entangled among the piles at arsenal point. The man was imprisoned under the No. 9,430, and his name was Jean Valjean."

## BOOK III.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE WATER QUESTION AT MONTFERMEIL.

MONTFERMEIL is situated between Livry and Chelles, on the southern slope of the lofty plateau which separates the Ourque from the Marne. At the present day it is a rather large place, adorned with stucco villas all the year round, and with holiday-making cits on Sunday. In 1823 there were neither so many white houses nor so many happy cits as there are now, and it was merely a village in the woods. A visitor certainly came across here and there a few country-houses of the last century, recognizable by their air of pretension, their balconies of twisted iron, and the tall windows, in which the little squares produce all sorts of green hues on the white of the closed shutters. But Montfermeil was not the less a village; retired cloth-dealers and persons fond of country life had not yet discovered it. It was a quiet, pleasant spot, which was not on a road to anywhere. Persons lived there cheaply that peasant life which is so tranquil and abundant. The only thing was that water was scarce, owing to the elevation of the plateau and it had to be fetched from some distance. That end of the village which was on the Gagny side obtained its water from the splendid ponds in the forest there; but the other end, which surrounds the church and is on the Chelles



side, could only obtain drinking water from a little spring about a quarter of an hour's walk from Montfermeil, near the road to Chelles ; laying in water was therefore a hard task for every family. The large houses and the aristocracy, among which Thénardier's pot-house may be reckoned, paid a liard a bucket to a man whose trade it was, and who earned by it about eight sous a day. But this man only worked till seven p.m. in summer, and till five in winter ; and once night had set in and the ground-floor shutters were closed, any person who had no water to drink must either fetch it or go without.

This was the terror of the poor creature whom the reader will not have forgotten, little Cosette. It will be remembered that Cosette was useful to the Thénardiers in two ways— they made the mother pay and the child act as servant. Hence when the mother ceased payment, for the reason which we know, the Thénardiers kept Cosette, who took the place of a servant. In this quality she had to fetch water when it was wanted, and the child, terrified at the idea of going to the spring at night, was very careful that the house should never be without water. Christmas of 1823 was peculiarly brilliant at Montfermeil ; the beginning of the winter was mild, and there had been neither snow nor frost. Some mountebanks, who came from Paris, had obtained leave from the mayor to erect their booth in the village high street, and a party of travelling hawkers had put their stalls in the church square, and even in the lane in which Thénardier's pot-house was situated. This filled the inns and pot-houses, and produced a noisy, joyous life in this quiet little place. As a faithful historian we are bound to add that among the curiosities displayed in the market-place was a menagerie, in which some ragged fellows showed the peasants of Montfermeil one of those terrific Brazil vultures of which the Paris Museum did not possess a specimen till 1845, and which have a tricolor cockade for an eye. Naturalists, I believe, call this bird *Caracara Polyborus* ; it belongs to the *Apicide* order and the vulture family. A few old Bonapartist soldiers living in the village went

to see this bird with devotion, and the owners declared that the tricolor cockade was a unique phenomenon, and expressly produced by Nature for their menagerie.

On the Christmas evening several carters and hawkers were sitting to drink, round four or five candles, in Thénardier's tap-room. This room was like those usually found in pot-houses; there were tables, pewter pots, bottles, drinkers, and smokers, but little light, and a good deal of uproar. The date of the year was, however, indicated by the two objects, fashionable at that time among tradespeople, and which were on a table—a kaleidoscope and a lamp of clouded tin. Madame Thénardier was watching the supper, which was roasting before a bright, clear fire, while her husband was drinking with his guests and talking politics. In addition to the political remarks, which mainly referred to the Spanish war and the Duc d'Angoulême, local parentheses like the following could be heard through the babel.

"Over at Nanterre and Suresne the vintage has been very productive,, and where people expected ten barrels they have ten. The grapes were very juicy when put under the press."—"But the grapes could not have been ripe?"—"In these parts, they must not be ripe, for the wine becomes oily in spring."—"Then it must be a very poor wine?"—"There are poorer wines than those about here," etc.

Or else a miller exclaimed,—

"Are we responsible for what there is in the sack? We find a lot of small seeds, which we can't waste time in sifting, and which must pass under the millstones; such as tares, lucern, cockles, vetches, amaranths, hemp-seed, and a number of other weeds, without counting the pebbles which are so frequent in some sorts of wheat, especially Breton wheat. I don't like grinding Breton wheat, any more than sawyers like sawing beams in which there are nails. You can fancy the bad dust all this makes in the hopper, and then people complain unfairly of the flour, for it is no fault of ours."

Between two windows a mower seated at a table with

a farmer, who was making a bargain to have a field mown in spring said,—

“There is no harm in the grass being damp, for it cuts better. But your grass is tender, and hard to cut, sir, for it is so young, and bends before the scythe,” etc.. etc.

Cosette was seated at her usual place, the cross bar of the table, near the chimney; she was in rags, her bare feet were thrust into wooden shoes, and she was knitting, by the firelight, stockings intended for the young Thénardiens. Two merry children could be heard laughing and prattling in an adjoining room; they were Eponine and Azelma. A cat-o'-nine-tails hung from a nail by the side of the chimney. At times the cry of a baby somewhere in the house was audible through the noise of the tap-room; it was a little boy Madame Thénardier had given birth to one winter, “without knowing how,” she used to say, “it was the effect of the cold,” and who was a little over three years of age. The mother suckled him, but did not love him; when his cries became too troublesome, Thénardier would say, “There’s your brat squalling; go and see what he wants.” “Stuff,” the mother would answer, “he’s a nuisance;” and the poor deserted little wretch would continue to cry in the darkness.

## CHAPTER II.

### TWO FULL-LENGTH PORTRAITS.

UP to the present, only a side-view of the Thénardiens has been offered the reader of this book, but the moment has now arrived to walk round the couple, and regard them on all sides. Thénardier had passed his fiftieth year, Madame Thénardier was just on her fortieth, which is fifty in a woman; and in this way there was a balance of age between husband and wife. Our readers may probably have retained from the first meeting some recollec-

tion of this tall, light-haired, red, fat, square, enormous, and active woman ; she belonged, as we said, to the race of giantesses, who show themselves at fairs, with paving stones hanging from their hair. She did everything in the house ; made the beds, cleaned the rooms, was cook and laundress, produced rain and fine weather, and played the devil. Her only assistant was Cosette, a mouse in the service of an elephant. All trembled at the sound of her voice, windows, furniture, and people ; and her large face, dotted with freckles, looked like a skimmer. She had a beard, and was the ideal of a Billingsgate porter dressed in female attire. She swore splendidly, and boasted of being able to crack a walnut with a blow of her fist. Had it not been for the romances she had read, and which at times made the finnikin woman appear under the ogress, no one would ever have dreamed of thinking that she was feminine. She seemed to be the product of a cross between a wench and a fishwife. When people heard her speak, they said, "'Tis a gendarme ;" when they saw her drink, they said, "'Tis a carter ;" and when they saw her treatment of Cosette, they said, "'Tis the hangman ;" when she was quiet, a tooth projected from her mouth.

Thénardier was a short, thin, sallow, angular, bony, weak man, who looked ill, and was perfectly well—his cunning began with this. He smiled habitually through caution, and was polite to nearly everybody, even to the beggar whom he refused a halfpenny. He had the eye of a ferret and the face of a man of letters, and greatly resembled the portraits of the Abbé Delille. His coquetry consisted in drinking with carriers, and no one had ever been able to intoxicate him. He wore a blouse and under it an old black coat, and had pretensions to literature and materialism. There were some names he frequently uttered in order to support an argument, such as Voltaire, Raynal, Parny, and, strangely enough, St. Augustine. He declared that he had "a system." For the rest, he was a thorough scamp. It will be remembered that he asserted he had been a soldier, and told people with

some pomp how at Waterloo, where he was sergeant in the 6th or 9th light something, he alone, against a squadron of Hussars of death, had covered with his body and saved "a severely wounded general." Hence came his flaming sign, and the name by which his house was generally known, "The Sergeant of Waterloo." He was liberal, classical, and Bonapartist; he had subscribed to the Champ d'Asile, and it was said in the village that he had studied for the priesthood. We believe that he had simply studied in Holland to be an innkeeper. This scoundrel of a composite order was in all probability some Fleming of Lille, a Frenchman at Paris, a Belgian at Brussels, conveniently striding over two frontiers. We know his prowess at Waterloo, and, as we see, he exaggerated slightly. Ebb and flow and wandering adventures were the elements of his existence. A tattered conscience entails an irregular life, and probably at the stormy period of June 18th, 1815, Thénardier belonged to that variety of marauding sutlers to whom we have alluded, who go about the country selling to some and robbing others, and moving about in a halting cart after marching troops, with the instinct of always joining the victorious army. When the campaign was over, having, as he said, "some brads," he opened a pot-house at Montfermeil. These "brads," consisting of purses and watches, gold rings, and silver crosses, collected in ditches filled with corpses, did not make a heavy total, and did not carry very far this sutler turned innkeeper.

Thénardier had something rectangular in his movements, which, when joined to an oath, recalls the barrack—to the sign of the cross, the seminary. He was a clever speaker, and liked to be thought educated, but the school-master noticed that he made mistakes. He drew up a traveller's bill in a masterly way, but practised eyes sometimes found orthographical errors in it. Thénardier was cunning, greedy, indolent, and skilful; he did not despise his servant girls, and for that reason his wife no longer kept any. This giantess was jealous, and fancied that this little yellow man must be an object of universal

covetousness. Thénardier above all, as a crafty and well-balanced man, was a villain of the temperate genus, and this breed is the worst, as hypocrisy is mixed up in them. It was not that Thénardier was not at times capable of passion, at least quite as much as his wife, but it was very rare, and at such moments—as he owed a grudge to the whole human race, as he had within him a profound furnace of hatred, as he was one of those persons who avenge themselves perpetually, who accuse everybody who passes before them for what falls upon them, and who are ever ready to cast on the first comer, as a legitimate charge, the whole of the annoyances, bankruptcies, and deceptions of their life—when all this leaven was working in him and boiling in his mouth and eyes, he was fearful. Woe to the person who came under his fury at such times.

In addition to his other qualities, Thénardier was attentive and penetrating, silent or chattering, according to occasion, and always with great intelligence. He had the glance of sailors who are accustomed to wink when looking through a telescope. Thénardier was a statesman. Any newcomer, on entering the pot-house, said upon seeing the woman, "That is the master of the house;" but it was an error—she was not even the mistress, for her husband was both master and mistress. She did and he created, he directed everything by a species of invisible and continuous magnetic action; a word, sometimes a sign, from him was sufficient, and the mastodon obeyed. The husband was to his wife, though she did not know it, a species of peculiar and sovereign being. However much she might dissent from "Monsieur Thénardier"—an inadmissible hypothesis—she would have never proved him publicly in the wrong for any consideration. She would never have committed "in the presence of strangers" that fault which wives so often commit, and which is called, in parliamentary language, "exposing the crown." Although their agreement only resulted in evil, there was contemplation in Madame Thénardier's submission to her husband. This mountain of noise and flesh moved under

the little finger of this frail despot ; seen from its dwarfish and grotesque aspect, it was the great universal thing—adoration of mind by matter. There was something strange in Thénardier, and hence came the absolute dominion of this man over this woman. At certain moments she saw him as a lighted candle, at others she felt him as a claw. This woman was a formidable creature, who only loved her children, and only feared her husband. She was a mother because she was mammiferous ; her maternity ceased, however, with her girls, and, as we shall see, did not extend to boys.

Thénardier, himself, had only one thought—to enrich himself, but he did not succeed, for a suitable stage was wanting for this great talent. Thénardier ruined himself at Montfermeil, if ruin is possible at zero ; in Switzerland or the Pyrenees he would have become a millionaire. But where fate fastens a landlord he must browse. In this year, 1823, Thénardier was in debt to the amount of 1,500 francs, which rendered him anxious. Whatever might be the obstinate injustice of destiny against him, Thénardier was one of those men who thoroughly understand, and in the most modern fashion, the theory which is a virtue in barbarous nations, and an article of sale among civilized nations—hospitality. He was also an admirable poacher, and renowned for the correctness of his aim, and he had a certain, cold, and peaceful laugh, which was peculiarly dangerous.

His landlord theories burst forth from him at times in flashes, and he had professional aphorisms which he drove into his wife's mind. "The duty of a landlord," he said one day savagely, and in a low voice, "is to sell to the first comer, ragouts, rest, light, fire, dirty sheets, chamber-maids, fleas, and smiles ; to arrest passers-by, empty small purses, and honestly lighten heavy ones ; to shelter respectfully travelling families, rasp the husband, peck the wife, and pluck the children ; to set a price on the open window, the shut window, the chimney corner, the easy-chair, the sofa, the stool, the feather-bed, the mattress, and the palliasse ; to know how much the

reflection wears off the looking-glass, and charge for it, and by the five hundred thousand fiends to make the traveller pay for everything, even to the flies his dog eats ! ”

This husband and this wife were craft and rage married, and formed a hideous and terrible pair. While the husband ruminated and combined, the she Thénardier did not think about absent creditors, had not thought of yesterday or to-morrow, and lived violently only for the moment. Such were these two beings, between whom Cosette stood, enduring their double pressure, like a creature who was being at once crushed by a millstone and torn with a pair of pinners. Man and wife had each a different way. Cosette was beaten, that came from the wife ; she went about barefoot in winter, that came from the husband. Cosette went up and down stairs, washed, brushed, scrubbed, swept, ran about, panted for breath, moved heavy weights, and, little though she was, did all the hard work. She could expect no pity from a ferocious mistress and a venomous master, and the “ Sergeant of Waterloo ” was, as it were, a web in which Cosette was caught and trembled. The ideal of oppression was realized by this gloomy household, and it was something like a fly serving spiders. The poor child was passively silent. What takes place in these souls, which have just left the presence of God, when they find themselves thus, in their dawn, all little and naked among human beings ?

### CHAPTER III.

#### MEN WANT WINE AND HORSES WATER.

FOUR new travellers arrived. Cosette was sorrowfully reflecting, for though only eight years of age she had already suffered so much that she thought with the mournful air of an old woman. Her eyelid was blackened by a blow which the woman had given her, which made



madame say now and then, "How ugly she is with her black eye!" Cosette was thinking then that it was late, very late; that she had been suddenly obliged to fill the jugs and bottles in the rooms of the travellers who had just arrived, and that there was no water in the cistern. What reassured her most was the fact that but little water was drunk at the "Sergeant of Waterloo." There was no lack of thirsty souls, but it was that sort of thirst which applies more readily to the wine jar than to the water bottle. Any one who asked for a glass of water among the glasses of wine would have appeared a savage to all these men. At one moment, however, the child trembled; her mistress raised the cover of a stew-pan, bubbling on a stove, then took a glass and hurried to the cistern. The child had turned, and was watching all the movements. A thin stream of water ran from the tap and filled the glass. "Hilloh," she said, "there is no water;" then she was silent for a moment, during which the child did not breathe.

"Well," Madame Thénardier continued, as she examined the half-filled glass, "this will be enough."

Cosette returned to her work, but for more than a quarter of an hour she felt her heart beating in her chest. She counted the minutes that passed thus, and wished that it were next morning. From time to time one of the toppers looked out into the street and said, "It's as black as pitch," or "A man would have to be a cat to go into the street at this hour without a lantern," and Cosette shivered. All at once one of the pedlars lodging at the inn came in and said in a harsh voice,—

"My horse has had no water."

"Oh, yes, it has," said Madame Thénardier.

"I tell you it has not, mother," the pedlar went on.

Cosette had crept out from under the table.

"Oh, yes, sir," she said, "your horse drank a bucketful, and I gave it the water and talked to it."

This was not true.

"There's a girl no bigger than one's fist who tells a lie as big as a house," the dealer exclaimed. "I tell you it has

not had any water, you little devil; it has a way of breathing which I know well when it has not drunk."

Cosette persisted, and added in a voice, rendered hoarse by agony, and which was scarce audible,—

"Oh, indeed, the horse drank a lot."

"Enough of this," the dealer said savagely, "give my horse water."

Cosette went back under the table.

"Well, that is but fair," said Madame, "if the brute has not drunk it ought to drink." Then she looked around her. "Why, where is the little devil?"

She stooped down, and discovered Cosette hidden at the other end of the table, almost under the feet of the toppers.

"Come out of that," her mistress shouted.

Cosette came out of the hole in which she had hidden herself, and the landlady continued,—

"Miss what's-your-name, give the horse water."

"There is no water, Madame," Cosette said faintly.

Her mistress threw the street door wide open.

"Well, go and fetch some."

Cosette hung her head, and fetched an empty bucket standing in a corner near the chimney; it was larger than herself, and she could have sat down in it comfortably. Madame Thénardier returned to her stove and tasted the contents of a stew-pan with a wooden spoon, while growling,—

"There's plenty at the spring. I believe it would have been better to sift the onions."

Then she rummaged in a drawer which contained halfpence, pepper, and shalots.

"Here, Miss Toad," she added, "as you come back, you will fetch a loaf from the baker's. Here's a fifteen sous piece."

Cosette had a small pocket in her apron, in which she placed the coin; then she stood motionless, bucket in hand, and with the door open before her. She seemed to be waiting for some one to come to her help.

"Be off," her mistress shouted.

Cosette went out and shut the door after her.

## CHAPTER IV.

## A DOLL COMES ON THE STAGE.

THE file of open-air shops, it will be remembered, ran as far as Thénardier's inn. These stalls, owing to the approaching passing of persons going to midnight mass, were all lit up with candles in paper funnels, which, as the schoolmaster, who was seated at this moment in Thénardier's tap-room, declared, produced a "magical effect." To make up for this not a star glittered in the sky. The last of these shops, right facing Thénardier's door, was a child's toy establishment, all flashing with tinsel, glass-beads, and magnificent things in block-tin. Right in front, the dealer had placed upon a white napkin an enormous doll, nearly two feet high, which was dressed in a pink crape gown, with golden wheat-ears in her hair, which was real hair, and had enamel eyes. The whole day had this marvel been displayed, to the amazement of all passers-by under ten years of age, but not a mother in Montfermeil had been rich enough or extravagant enough to give it to her child. Eponine and Azelma had spent hours in contemplating it, and even Cosette had ventured to take a furtive look at it.

At the moment when Cosette went out, bucket in hand, though she felt so sad and desolate, she could not refrain from raising her eyes to the prodigious doll, the "lady," as she called it. The poor child stopped petrified, for she had not seen this doll so close before. The whole stall seemed to her a palace, and this doll was not a doll, but a vision. Joy, splendour, wealth, and happiness appeared in a sort of chimerical radiance to the unhappy little creature who was deeply buried in mournful and cold wretchedness. Cosette measured with the simple and sad sagacity of childhood the abyss which separated her from this doll. She said to herself that a person must be a queen or a princess to have a "thing" like that. She looked at the fine dress, the long smooth hair, and thought, "How

happy that doll must be ! ” She could not take her eyes off this fantastic shop, and the more she looked the more dazzled she became, and she fancied she saw Paradise. There were other dolls behind the large one, which appeared to her fairies and genii. The tradesman, who walked about at the back of the shop, seemed to her the Eternal Father. In this adoration she forgot everything, even the task on which she was sent, but suddenly the rough voice of her mistress recalled her to the reality. “ What, you little devil, you have not gone ! just wait till I come to you, you little toad.” Madame Thénardier had taken a look out into the street, and noticed Cosette in ecstasy. The child ran off with the bucket, making enormous strides.

As Thénardier’s inn was in that part of the village near the church, Cosette had to fetch the water from the spring in the forest on the Chelles side. She did not look at another stall ; so long as she was in the lane and the vicinity of the church, the illuminated booths lit up the road, but the last gleam of the last stall soon disappeared, and the poor child found herself in darkness. She went further into it, but, as she felt some emotion while walking, she shook the handle of her bucket as much as she could, which produced a noise that gave her company. The further she went, the more dense the gloom became ; there was no one in the streets except a woman, who turned on seeing her pass, and muttered between her teeth, “ Wherever can the child be going ? can she be a goblin ? ” Then she recognized Cosette. “ Why,” she said, “ it is the Lark.” Cosette in this way went through the labyrinth of winding, deserted streets which end the village of Montfermeil on the side of Chelles ; and so long as she had houses, or even walls on both sides of the way, she walked rather boldly. From time to time she saw a candle glimmering through the crack of a shutter ; it was light and life, people were there, and this reassured her. Still, in proportion as she advanced, her step became slower, as if mechanically, and when she had passed the corner of the last house,

Cosette stopped. Going beyond the last stall had been difficult, but going further than the last house became an impossibility. She put her bucket on the ground, plunged her hand into her hair, and began scratching her head slowly—a gesture peculiar to terrified and undecided children. It was no longer Montfermeil, but the fields, and black, deserted space was before her. She looked despairingly at this space in which there was nobody, but where there were beasts, and there might be ghosts. She looked out, and heard the beasts walking in the grass, and distinctly saw the ghosts moving among the trees. Then she took her bucket again, and fear gave her boldness. “Well,” she said, “I will tell her that there was no water;” and she boldly re-entered Montfermeil. She had scarce gone one hundred yards when she stopped, and began scratching her head again. Now it was her mistress who appeared to her—her hideous mistress with her hyæna mouth, and her eyes flashing with passion. The child took a lamentable glance before and behind her. What should she do? what would become of her? where should she go? It was from her mistress she recoiled; she turned back in the direction of the spring, and began running. She left the village running, she entered the wood running, looking at nothing, hearing nothing. She did not stop till breath failed her, but she still went on ahead, wildly. While running she felt inclined to cry, for the nocturnal rustling of the forest completely surrounded her. She did not think, she did not see; the immensity of night was opposed to this little creature; on one side was darkness, on the other an atom. It was only seven or eight minutes’ walk from the skirt of the wood to the spring, and Cosette knew the road from having gone there several times by day. Strange to say, she did not lose her way, for a remnant of instinct vaguely guided her; still she did not look either to the right or left, for fear of seeing things in the branches and shrubs. In this way she reached the spring; it was a narrow, natural basin hollowed by the water in the dry soil, about two

feet in depth, surrounded by moss and that gauffered grass which is called Henri IV.'s ruff, and paved with a few heavy stones. A rivulet escaped from it with a little gentle murmur.

Cosette did not take the time to breathe ; it was very dark, but she was accustomed to come to this fountain. She felt in the obscurity for a young oak that leant over the spring, and usually served her as a support, caught a branch, stooped down, and plunged the bucket into the water. She was in such a violent state that her strength was tripled. While thus bent, she did not notice that the pocket of her apron emptied itself into the stream, and that the fifteen sous piece fell into the water. Cosette neither saw nor heard it fall ; she drew up the bucket nearly full, and placed it on the grass. This done, she felt that she was exhausted with fatigue ; she would have liked to start again at once, but the effort of filling the bucket had been so great that she found it impossible to move a step. She fell on to the grass, and lay there utterly exhausted. She shut her eyes, then opened them again, not knowing why, but unable to do otherwise. By her side the water stirring in the bucket made circles that resembled snakes of white fire. Over her head the sky was covered with large black clouds, which seemed like smoke ; the tragic mask of the gloom seemed to bend vaguely over this child. Jupiter was setting in the profundity ; the child gazed with a wondering eye at this large star, which she did not know, and which terrified her. The planet, in fact, was at this moment very near the horizon, and was passing through a dense fog which gave it a horrible redness. The fog, which was of a gloomy, purple hue, enlarged the planet, and it looked like a luminous wound. A cold wind blew from the plain ; the wood was dark, but there was no rustling of leaves, and none of the vague and fresh gleams of summer. Large branches stood out frightfully, and shapeless, stunted bushes sighed in the glades. The tall grass twined under the breeze like eels, and the brambles writhed like long arms provided with claws

seeking to clutch their prey. A few withered patches of fern, impelled by the breeze, passed rapidly, and seemed to be flying before something that was coming up.

Without understanding what she experienced, Cosette felt herself affected by this black enormity of nature : it was no longer terror alone that overpowered her, but something even more terrible than terror. She shuddered, and words fail us to describe the strange nature of this shudder which chilled her to the heart. Her eye had become stern, and she felt as if she could not prevent herself from returning to the same spot on the morrow. Then, by a species of instinct, and in order to emerge from this singular state which she did not understand, but which terrified her, she began counting aloud one, two, three, four, up to ten, and when she finished, she began again. This restored her a true perception of the things that surrounded her : she felt the coldness of her hands which she had wetted in drawing the water. She rose, for fear had seized upon her again, a natural and insurmountable fear. She had only one thought left, to fly, fly at full speed through the wood, and across the fields, as far as the houses, the windows, and the lighted candles. Her eye fell on the bucket before her ; and such was the terror with which her mistress inspired her that she did not dare fly without the bucket. She seized the handle with both hands and found it difficult to lift. She proceeded thus for about a dozen yards, but the bucket was full and heavy, and she was compelled to set it on the ground. She breathed for a moment, and then lifted the bucket and started again, this time going a little further. But she was still obliged to stop once more, and after a few moments' rest, set out again. She walked with body bent forward and drooping head, like an old woman ; and the weight of the bucket stiffened her thin arms. The iron handle swelled and froze her small white hands. From time to time she was forced to stop, and each time she did so, the cold water from the bucket plashed her bare legs. This occurred in the heart of a wood, at night in winter, far from any

human eye. She was a child of eight years of age, and God alone at this moment saw this sorrowful sight, and her mother too, doubtless! for there are things which open the eyes of the dead in their graves.

She breathed with a sort of dolorous rattle; sobs contracted her throat, but she did not dare cry, for she was so afraid of her mistress, even at a distance. It was her habit, always to imagine Madame Thénardier present. Still, she did not make much progress in this way, and she walked very slowly, although she strove to lessen the length of her halts and walk as long as she possibly could between them. She thought with agony that it would take her more than an hour to get back to Montfermeil in this way, and that her mistress would beat her. This agony was mingled with her terror at being alone in the wood at night; she was worn out with fatigue, and had not yet left the forest. On reaching an old chestnut tree which she knew, she made a longer halt than the others to rest herself thoroughly; then she collected her all strength, took up the bucket again, and began walking courageously. Still, the poor little creature in her despair could not refrain from exclaiming, "Oh God! Oh God!" All at once she suddenly felt that the bucket no longer weighed anything; a hand which seemed to her enormous, had seized it, and was vigorously lifting it. She raised her head, and saw a tall, black form walking by her side; it was a man who had come up behind her, and whom she had not heard. This man, without saying a word, had seized the handle of the bucket which she was carrying. There is an instinct in every meeting of this life, and the child felt no fear.

## CHAPTER V.

BOULATRUELLE MAY HAVE BEEN RIGHT.

ON the afternoon of this same Christmas day, 1823, a man walked for a long time about the most desolate part



of the Boulevard de l'Hôpital, at Paris. He seemed to be looking for a lodging, and to stop for choice at the most shabby houses in this skirt of the Faubourg St. Marceau. As we shall see presently, this man had really hired a bedroom in this isolated district. Both in dress and person, he realized the type of what might be called the respectable mendicant, or extreme misery combined with extreme cleanliness. This is a very rare blending, which inspires intelligent minds with the two-fold respect which is felt for the very poor and the very worthy man. He wore a very old and carefully-brushed round hat, a threadbare coat of coarse yellow-ochre coloured cloth, a colour which was not absolutely odd at that day, a long waistcoat with enormous pockets, black breeches which had turned grey at the knees, black worsted stockings, and stout shoes with brass buckles. He looked like the ex-tutor of a good family returned from emigration. From his white hair, wrinkled forehead, livid lips, and his face in which everything revealed weariness of life, he might have been supposed much beyond sixty years of age; but his firm though slow step, and the singular vigour imprinted on all his movements, made him look scarce fifty. The wrinkles on his forehead were well placed, and would have favourably disposed any one who observed him closely; his lip was contracted by a strange curve, which seemed stern but was humble, and there was a sad serenity in his look. He carried in his left hand a small parcel tied up in a handkerchief; and in his right he had a stick cut from a hedge. This stick had been carved with some care, and was not too bad looking; advantage had been taken of the knots, and a coral knob had been made with red sealing wax—it was a cudgel and seemed a cane.

Few people pass along this Boulevard, especially in winter; this man, however, seemed to avoid rather than seek them, though without affectation. At this period Louis XVIII. went almost daily to Choisy le Roi, which was one of his favourite drives. At two o'clock the royal carriage and escort could almost invariably be seen

passing at full gallop along the Boulevard de l'Hôpital. This did as well as a clock or watch for the poor women of the district, who said, "It is two o'clock, for he is returning to the Tuileries." And some ran up and others drew up, for a king who passes always produces a tumult. Moreover, the appearance and disappearance of Louis XVIII. produced a certain effect in the streets of Paris, for it was rapid but majestic. This impotent king had a taste for galloping; unable to walk, he wished to run; and this cripple would have liked to be drawn by lightning. He passed, peaceful and stern, amid drawn sabres; his heavy, gilded berline, with large branches of lilies painted on the panels, rolled noisily along. There was scarce time to take a glance at him; you saw in the right-hand corner a broad, firm, red face, a healthy forehead powdered *à l'oiseau royal*, a proud, harsh, artful eye, an intelligent smile, two heavy epaulettes with hanging fringe upon a civilian coat; the golden fleece, the cross of St. Louis, the cross of the Legion of Honour, the silver plate of the Holy Ghost, a large stomach, and a wide blue ribbon—it was the king. When out of Paris he carried his white feathered hat on his knees, up to which came tall English gaiters; when he returned to the city he put his hat on his head, and bowed rarely. He looked at the people coldly, and they returned the compliment; when he appeared for the first time in the Faubourg St. Marceau, his entire success consisted in a remark made by a workman to his chum—"That fat man is the government."

The infallible passage of the king at the same hour was hence the daily event of the Boulevard de l'Hôpital. The promenader in the yellow coat plainly did not belong to that quarter, and probably not to Paris, for he was ignorant of the fact. When at two o'clock the royal carriage, surrounded by Life Guards with their silver aiguillettes, turned into the Boulevard, after coming round the Salpêtrière, he seemed surprised and almost terrified. As he was alone in the walk, he quickly concealed himself behind an angle of the wall; but this

did not prevent the Duc d'Havre from noticing him. The Duc, as Captain of the Guards on duty that day, was seated in the carriage opposite to the king, and said to his Majesty, "There is an ill-looking fellow." The policemen who cleared the way for the king also noticed him, and one of them received orders to follow him. But the man turned into the solitary streets of the Faubourg, and, as night was setting in, the agent lost his trail, as is proved by a report addressed the same evening to Count Anglès, Minister of State and Prefect of Police. When the man in the yellow coat had thrown out the agent, he doubled his pace, though not without looking back many times to make sure that he was not followed. At a quarter-past four, that is to say, at nightfall, he passed in front of the Porte St. Martin theatre, where the "Two Convicts" would be performed that evening. This bill, lit up by theatre lamps, struck him, for though he was walking rapidly, he stopped to read it. A moment later he entered "The Pewter Platter," which was at that time the office of the Lagny coach, which started at half-past four. The horses were put in, and the passengers, summoned by the driver, were hastily clambering up the iron steps of the vehicle. The man asked,—

"Have you a seat left?"

"Only one, by my side, on the box," the driver said

"I will take it."

"Get up," the driver said.

Before starting, however, he took a glance at the passenger's poor dress, and the smallness of his bundle, and asked for the fare.

"Are you going all the way to Lagny?" he said.

"Yes," the man answered.

The traveller paid his fare to Lagny, and the coach started. After passing the city gate, the driver tried to get up a conversation, but the traveller only answered in monosyllables, so the driver began whistling and swearing at his horses. As the night was cold, he wrapped himself in his cloak, but the passenger did not

seem to notice it. At about six o'clock they reached Chelles, where the driver stopped for a moment to let his horses breathe, at an inn opened in the old buildings of the Royal Abbey.

"I shall get down here," the man said.

He took his bundle and stick and jumped off the coach. A moment after he had disappeared, but he did not enter the inn. When the coachman started again a few moments after, he did not meet him in the high street of Lagny, and he turned round to his inside passengers.

"That man," he said, "does not belong to these parts, for I do not know him. He looks as if he had not a penny, and yet he don't care for money, as he paid his fare to Lagny and only came as far as Chelles. It is night, all the houses are closed, he has not gone into the inn, and yet I can't see him, so he must have sunk into the ground."

The man had not sunk into the ground, but walked hastily along the main street of Chelles, in the darkness ; then he turned to his left before reaching the church, into a cross-road that runs to Montfermeil, like a man who knows the country and had been there before. He followed this road rapidly, and at the spot where it is intersected by the old road that runs from Lagny to Gagny, he heard wayfarers coming. He hurriedly concealed himself in a ditch, and waited till they had passed ; the precaution, however, was almost superfluous, for, as we have said, it was a very dark December night, and only two or three stars were visible in the sky. The man did not return to the Montfermeil road, but went to his right, across the fields, and hurried in the direction of the wood. When he was in it, he slackened his pace, and began looking carefully at all the trees, walking step by step, as if seeking and following a mysterious road known to himself alone. There was a moment at which he seemed to lose himself, and appeared undecided, but at last, by repeated groping, he reached a glade in which there was a pile of large white stones. He walked hur-

riedly toward these stones and attentively examined them, as if passing them in review. A large tree, covered with those excrescences which are the warts of vegetation, was a few paces from the heap; he went up to it and passed his hand over the bark as if trying to recognize and count all the warts. Opposite this tree, which was an ash, there was a sickly chestnut shedding its bark, upon which a ring of zinc had been placed as a poultice; he stood on tip-toe and felt this ring, then he examined for some time the ground in the space contained between the tree and the stones, as if assuring himself that the ground had not been freshly turned up. This done, he looked about him, and resumed his walk through the wood.

It was this man who came across Cosette. While proceeding in the direction of Montfermeil, he perceived this little shadow depositing a load on the ground, then taking it up again, and continuing her journey. He went up, and saw that it was a young child carrying an enormous bucket; then he drew to her side and silently took the bucket handle.

## CHAPTER VI.

### COSETTE IN THE DARK WITH THE STRANGER.

COSETTE, as we stated, was not frightened. The man spoke to her in a serious, almost low voice,—

"My child, what you are carrying is very heavy."

Cosette raised her head and replied, "Yes, sir."

"Give it to me," the man continued, "I will carry it."

Cosette let go the bucket, and the man walked on by her side.

"It is really very heavy," he muttered; then added,

"What is your age, little one?"

"Eight years, sir."

"And you have come far with this?"

"From the spring in the wood."

"And how far have you to go?"

"About a quarter of an hour's walk."

The man stopped for a moment, and then suddenly said,—

"Then you have not a mother?"

"I do not know," the child answered.

Before the man had time to speak, she continued,—

"I do not think so; other girls have one, but I have not."

And after a silence she added,—

"I believe that I never had one."

The man stopped, put the bucket on the ground, and laid his two hands on her shoulders, making an effort to see her face in the darkness. Cosette's thin sallow countenance was vaguely designed in the vivid gleam of the sky.

"What is your name?" the man asked her.

"Cosette."

The man seemed to have an electric shock; he looked at her again, then removed his hands, took the bucket up again, and continued his walk. A moment after he asked,—

"Where do you live, little one?"

"At Monfermeil, if you know the place."

"Are we going there?"

"Yes, sir."

There was another pause, and then he began again.

"Who was it that sent you to fetch water from the wood at this hour?"

"Madame Thénardier."

The man continued with an accent which he strove to render careless, but in which there was, for all that, a singular tremor.

"What is this Madame Thénardier?"

"She is my mistress," the child said, "and keeps the inn."

"The inn?" remarked the man; "well, I am going to lodge there to-night. Show me the way."

"We are going to it."

Though the man walked rather quickly, Cosette had no difficulty in keeping up with him; she no longer felt

fatigue, and from time to time raised her eyes to this man with a sort of indescribable calmness and confidence. She had never been taught to turn her eyes toward Providence, and yet she felt within her something that resembled hope and joy, and which rose to heaven. After the lapse of a few minutes the man continued,—

“Does Madame Thénardier keep no servant?”

“No, sir.”

“Is there no one but you?”

“No, sir.”

There was another interruption, and then Cosette raised her voice,—

“That is to say, there are two little girls.”

“What little girls?”

“Ponine and Zelma.”

The child simplified in this way the romantic names dear to Madame Thénardier.

“Who are they?”

“They are Madame Thénardier’s young ladies, as you may say—her daughters.”

“And what do they do?”

“Oh!” said the child, “they have handsome dolls, and things all covered with gold. They play about and amuse themselves.”

“All day?”

“Yes, sir.”

“And you?”

“Oh, I work.”

“All day?”

The child raised her large eyes, in which stood a tear, invisible in the darkness, and replied softly,—

“Yes, sir.” After a silence she continued. “Sometimes, when I have finished my work and they allow me, I amuse myself.”

“In what way?”

“As I can; they let me be, but I have not many toys. Ponine and Zelma do not like me to play with their dolls, and I have only a little leaden sword, no longer than that.”

## COSETTE.

The child held out her little finger.

"And which does not cut?"

"Oh yes, sir," said the child, "it cuts salad and chops flies' heads off."

They reached the village, and Cosette guided the stranger through the streets. When they passed the baker's, Cosette did not think of the loaf which she was to bring in. The man had ceased questioning her, and preserved a gloomy silence; but when they had left the church behind them, on seeing all the open-air shops, he asked Cosette,—

"Is it the fair time?"

"No, sir, it is Christmas."

When they approached the inn, Cosette touched his arm timidly.

"Sir."

"What is it, my child?"

"We are close to the house."

"Well?"

"Will you let me carry my bucket now?"

"Why?"

"Because Madame will be at me if she sees that it has been carried for me."

The man gave her the bucket, and a moment later they were at the door of the pot-house.

## CHAPTER VII.

### IS HE RICH OR POOR?

COSETTE could not refrain from taking a side glance at the large doll which was still displayed at the toy-shop, and then tapped at the door; it opened, and Madame Thénardier appeared, candle in hand.

"Oh, it's you, you little devil: well, I'll be hanged if you have not taken time enough: you've been playing, I expect."



"Madame," said Cosette, with a violent tremor; "this gentleman wants a bedroom."

Madame Thénardier exchanged her coarse look for an amiable grimace, a change peculiar to landladies, and greedily turned her eyes on the newcomer.

"Is this the gentleman?" she said.

"Yes, Madame," the man answered, touching his hat.

Rich travellers are not so polite. This gesture and the inspection of the stranger's clothes and luggage, which the landlady took in at a glance, caused the amiable grimace to disappear and the rough look to return. She continued drily,—

"Come in, my good man."

The "good man" entered; the landlady gave him a second look, carefully examined his threadbare coat and broken-brimmed hat, and consulted her husband, who was still drinking with the carter, by a toss of the head, a curl of her nose, and a wink. The husband answered, with that imperceptible movement of the forefinger which, laid on the puffed-out lips, signifies, "No go." Upon this the landlady exclaimed,—

"My good man, I am very sorry, but I haven't a bedroom disengaged."

"Put me where you like," the man said, "in the loft or the stable. I will pay as if it were a bedroom."

"Forty sous."

"Be it so."

"Forty sous!" a carrier whispered to the landlady; "why, it is only twenty sous."

"It's forty for a man like him," Madame Thénardier replied in the same tone; "I do not lodge poor people under."

"That is true," the husband added gently; "it injures a house to have customers of that sort."

In the meanwhile the man, after leaving his bundle and stick on a form, sat down at a table on which Cosette had hastened to place a bottle of wine and a glass. The pedlar who had asked for the bucket of water himself carried it to his horse, while Cosette returned to her place under the

kitchen table and her knitting. The man, who had scarce moistened his lips with the glass of wine he poured out, gazed at the child with strange attention. Cosette was ugly, but had she been happy she might possibly have been pretty. We have already sketched her little overclouded face: Cosette was thin and sickly, and, though eight years of age, looked hardly six. Her large eyes, buried in a species of shadow, were almost extinguished by constant crying, while the corners of her mouth had the curve of habitual agony, which may be observed in condemned prisoners and in patients who are given over. Her hands were, as her mother had foretold, ruined with chilblains. The firelight, which shone upon her at this moment, brought out the angles of her bones and rendered her thinness frightfully visible; as she constantly shivered, she had grown into the habit of always keeping her knees pressed against each other. Her entire clothing was one rag, which would have aroused pity in summer, and caused horror in winter. She had only torn calico upon her person, and not a morsel of woollen stuff; her skin was here and there visible, and everywhere could be distinguished blue or black marks, indicating the spots where her mistress had beaten her. Her bare legs were red and rough, and the hollow between her shoulder-blades would have moved you to tears. The whole person of this child, her attitude, the sound of her voice, the interval between one word and the next, her look, her silence, her slightest movement, expressed and translated but one idea—fear. Fear was spread over her; she was, so to speak, clothed in it; fear drew up her elbows against her hips, withdrew her heels under her petticoats, made her occupy as little room as possible, breathe only when absolutely necessary, and had become what might be called the habit of her body, without any possible variation save that of increasing. There was a corner in her eye in which terror lurked. This fear was so great that Cosette on returning wet through did not dare go to the fire, but silently began her work again. The expression of this child's eye was habitually so gloomy and at times so

tragedy, that it seemed at certain moments as if she were on the point of becoming either an idiot or a demon. Never, as we said, had she known what prayer was ; never had she set foot in a church. " Can I spare the time for it ? " Madame Thénardier used to say. The man in the yellow coat did not take his eyes off Cosette. All at once her mistress cried,—

" Hilloh ! where's the loaf ? "

Cosette, according to her custom whenever Madame Thénardier raised her voice, quickly came from under the table. She had completely forgotten the loaf, and had recourse to the expedient of terrified children—she told a falsehood.

" Madame, the baker's was shut up."

" You ought to have knocked."

" I did so, but it would not open."

" I shall know to-morrow whether that is the truth," said her mistress, " and if it is not, look out, that's all. In the meanwhile give me back my fifteen-sous piece."

Cosette plunged her hand into the pocket of her apron and turned green ; the coin was no longer in it.

" Well," her mistress said, " did you not hear me ? "

Cosette turned her pocket out, but there was nothing in it : what could have become of the money ? The wretched little creature could not find a word to say, she was petrified.

" Have you lost it ? " her mistress asked, " or are you trying to rob me ? "

At the same time she stretched out her hand to the cat-o'-nine-tails ; this formidable gesture restored Cosette the strength to cry,—

" Mercy, Madame ; I will never do it again."

The man in the yellow coat had been feeling in his waistcoat pocket, though no one noticed it. Moreover, the other guests were drinking or card-playing, and paid no attention to him. Cosette had retreated in agony to the chimney corner, shivering to make herself as little as she could, and protect her poor half-naked limbs. Her mistress raised her arm.

"I beg your pardon, Madame," said the man, "but just now I saw something fall out of the little girl's pocket, and roll away. It may be that."

At the same time he stooped and appeared to be searching for a moment.

"Yes, here it is," he continued, as he rose and held out a coin to the landlady.

"Yes, that's it," she said.

It was not the real coin, it was a twenty-sous piece, but Madame made a profit by the transaction. She put it in her pocket, and confined herself to giving the child a stern glance, saying, "That had better not happen again."

Cosette returned to what her mistress called her niche, and her large eyes, fixed on the strange traveller, began to assume an expression they had never met before. It was no longer a simple astonishment, but a sort of stupefied confidence was mingled with it.

"Do you want any supper?" the landlady asked the traveller.

He did not reply, but seemed to be lost in thought. "What can this man be?" she muttered to herself; "he is some wretched beggar who has not a penny to pay for his supper. Will he be able to pay for his bedroom? It is lucky, after all, that he did not think of stealing the silver coin that was on the ground."

At this moment a door opened, and Eponine and Azelma came in. They were really two pretty little girls, rather tradesman's daughters than peasants, and very charming, one with her auburn well-smoothed tresses, the other with long black plaits hanging down her back; both were quick, clean, plump, fresh, and pleasant to look on through their beaming health. They were warmly clothed, but with such maternal art that the thickness of the stuff did not remove anything of the coquetry of the style; winter was foreseen, but spring was not effaced. In their dress, their gaiety, and the noise which they made, there was a certain queenliness. When they came in, their mother said to them in a scolding voice, which was full of adoration, "There you are, then."

Then, drawing them on to her knees in turn, smoothing their hair, retying their ribbons, and letting them go with that gentle shake which is peculiar to mothers, she exclaimed, "How smart they are!" They sat down by the fireside, with a doll which they turned over on their knees with all sorts of joyous prattle. At times Cosette raised her eyes from her knitting and mournfully watched their playing. Eponine and Azelma did not look at Cosette, for to them she was like a dog. These three little girls did not count four-and-twenty years between them, and already represented human society—on one side envy, on the other, disdain. The doll was very old and broken, but it did not appear the less wonderful to Cosette, who never in her life possessed a doll, "a real doll," to employ an expression which all children well understand. All at once, the landlady, who was going about the room, noticed that Cosette was idling, and watching the children instead of working.

"Ah, I have caught you," she exclaimed; "that's the way you work, is it? I'll make you work with the cat-o'-nine-tails."

The stranger, without leaving his chair, turned to Madame Thénardier.

"Oh, Madame," he said, with an almost timid smile, "let her play."

Such a wish would have been a command from any traveller who had ordered a good supper and drunk a couple of bottles of wine, and who did not look like a beggar. But the landlady did not tolerate a man who had such a hat having a desire! and one who wore such a coat daring to have a will of his own! Hence she answered sharply,—

"She must work, since she eats; I do not keep her to do nothing."

"What is she doing, pray?" the stranger continued, in that gentle voice which formed such a strange contrast with his beggar clothes and porter shoulders.

The landlady deigned to reply,—

"She is knitting stockings, if you please, for my little

girls, who have none, so to speak, and are forced to go about barefooted."

The man looked at Cosette's poor red feet, and said,—

"When will she have finished that pair of stockings?"

"She has three or four good days' work, the idle slut."

"And how much may such a pair be worth when finished?"

The landlady gave him a contemptuous glance.

"At least thirty sous."

"Will you sell them to me for five francs?" the man continued.

"By Job," a carrier who was listening exclaimed, with a coarse laugh, "I should think so—five balls!"

M. Thénardier thought it his duty to speak.

"Yes, sir, if such be your fancy, you can have the pair of stockings for five francs; we cannot refuse travellers anything."

"Cash payment," the landlady said in her peremptory voice.

"I buy the pair of stockings," the man said, and added, as he drew a five-franc piece from his pocket and laid it on the table, "I pay for them."

Then he turned to Cosette,—

"Your labour is now mine, so play, my child."

The carrier was so affected by the five-franc piece that he left his glass and hurried up.

"It is real," he exclaimed, after examining it, "a true hind-wheel and no mistake."

Thénardier came up, and silently put the coin in his pocket. The landlady could make no answer, but she bit her lips, and her face assumed an expression of hatred. Cosette was trembling, but still ventured to ask,—

"Is it true, Madame? May I play?"

"Play," her mistress said, in a terrible voice.

And while her lips thanked the landlady, all her little soul thanked the traveller. Thénardier had returned to his glass, and his wife whispered in his ear,—

"What can this yellow man be?"

"I have seen," Thénardier replied, with a sovereign air, "millionaires who wore a coat like his."

Cosette had laid down her needle, but did not dare leave her place, for, as a rule, she moved as little as possible. She took from a box behind her a few old rags and her little leaden sword. Eponine and Azelma paid no attention to what was going on, for they were carrying out a very important operation. They had seized the cat, thrown the doll on the ground, and Eponine, who was the elder, was wrapping up the kitten, in spite of its miaulings and writhings, in a quantity of red and blue rags. While performing this serious and difficult task, she was saying to her sister in the sweet and adorable language of children, the grace of which, like the glistening of butterflies' wings, disappears when you try to fix it,—

"This doll, sister, is more amusing than the other, you see, for it moves, it cries, and is warm; so we will play with it. It is my little daughter, and I am a lady; you will call upon me and look at it. By degrees you will see its whiskers, and that will surprise you, and then you will see its ears and its tail, and that will surprise you too, and you will say to me, 'Oh my goodness!' and I shall answer, 'Yes, Madame, it is a little child I have like that; little children are so at present.'"

Azelma listened to Eponine in admiration; in the meanwhile the toppers had begun singing an obscene song at which they laughed till the ceiling shook, Thénardier encouraging and accompanying them. In the same way as birds make a nest of everything, children make a doll of no matter what. While Eponine and Azelma were wrapping up the kitten, Cosette on her side was performing the same operation on her sword. This done, she laid it on her arm, and sang softly to lull it to sleep. A doll is one of the most imperious wants, and at the same time one of the most delicious instincts, of feminine childhood. To clean, clothe, adorn, dress, undress, dress again, teach, scold a little, nurse, lull, send to sleep, and imagine that something is somebody—the whole future of a woman is contained in this. While dreaming and prattling, making

little trousseaux and cradles, while sewing little frocks and aprons, the child becomes a girl, the girl becomes a maiden, and the maiden a woman. The first child is a continuation of the last doll. A little girl without a doll is nearly as unhappy and quite as impossible as a wife without children; Cosette, therefore, made a doll of her sword. The landlady, in the meanwhile, walked up to the "yellow man." "My husband is right," she thought: "it is perhaps M. Lafitte. Some rich men are so whimsical." She leant her elbow on the table and said, "Sir——"

At the word "Sir" the man turned round, for the female Thénardier had up to the present only addressed him as "My good man."

"You see, sir," she continued, assuming her gentle air, which was still more dreadful to see than her fierce look, "I am glad to see the child play, and do not oppose it, and it is all right for once, as you are generous. But, you see, she has nothing, and must work."

"Then she is not a child of yours?" the man asked.

"Oh! Lord, no, sir; she is a poor little girl we took in out of charity. She is a sort of imbecile, and I think has water on the brain, for she has a big head. We do all we can for her, but we are not rich, and though we write to her people, we have not had an answer for six months. It looks as if the mother were dead."

"Ah!" said the man, and fell back into a reverie.

"The mother couldn't have been much," the landlady added, "for she deserted her child."

During the whole of the conversation, Cosette, as if an instinct warned her that she was being talked about, did not take her eyes off her mistress. She listened, and heard two or three indistinct words here and there. In the meanwhile, the drinkers, who were three parts intoxicated, struck up their unclean song again with redoubled gaiety, and Madame Thénardier went to take part in the bursts of laughter. Cosette, under her table, looked at the fire which was reflected in her fixed eyes; she had begun rocking her doll again, and while lulling it to sleep, sang in a low voice, "My mother is dead, my mother is



## LES MISÉRABLES.

dead, my mother is dead." On being pressed again by the landlady, the yellow man, the "millionaire," consented to take some supper.

"What will you have, sir?"

"Bread and cheese."

"He is certainly a beggar," the landlady thought. The drunkards were still singing their song, and the child under the table still sung hers. All at once Cosette broke off; she turned, and perceived the doll lying on the ground a few paces from the kitchen table, which the children had thrown down on taking up the kitten. She let the wrapped-up sword, which only half-satisfied her, fall, and then slowly looked round the room. The landlady was whispering to her husband and reckoning some change. Eponine and Azelma were playing with the kitten, the guests were eating, drinking, or singing, and no one noticed her. She had not a moment to lose, so she crept on her hands and knees from under the table, assured herself once again that she was not watched, and seized the doll. A moment after she was back in her seat, and turned so that the doll that she held in her arms should be in the shadow. The happiness of playing with this doll was almost too much for her. No one had seen her, excepting the traveller, who was slowly eating his poor supper. This joy lasted nearly a quarter of an hour, but in spite of the caution which Cosette took, she did not notice that one of the doll's feet was peeping out, and that the fire lit it up very distinctly. This pink luminous foot emerging from the glow suddenly caught the eye of Azelma, who said to Eponine, "Look, sister."

The two little girls were stupefied: Cosette had dared to take their doll! Eponine rose, and without letting the cat go, ran to her mother and plucked the skirt of her dress.

"Let me be," said the mother; "what do you want now?"

"Mother," said the girl, "just look!"

And she pointed to Cosette, who, yielding entirely to the ecstasy of possession, saw and heard nothing more. The landlady's face assumed that peculiar expression,

which is composed of the terrible blended with the trifles of life, and which has caused such women to be christened Megæras. This time wounded pride exasperated her wrath ; Cosette had leapt over all bounds, and had made an assault on the young ladies' doll. A czarina who saw a moujik trying on her Imperial son's blue ribbon, would not have a different face. She cried in a voice which indignation rendered hoarse, " Cosette ! "

Cosette started as if the earth had trembled beneath her and turned round.

" Cosette ! " her mistress repeated.

Cosette gently laid the doll on the ground with a species of veneration mingled with despair : then, without taking her eyes off it, she clasped her hands, and, frightful to say of a child of her age, wrung them, and then burst into tears, a thing which none of the emotions of the day had caused—neither the walk in the wood, the weight of the bucket, the loss of the coin, the sight of the lash, nor the harsh remarks of her mistress. The traveller had risen from his chair. " What is the matter ? " he asked the landlady.

" Don't you see ? " she replied, pointing to the *corpus delicti* which lay at Cosette's feet.

" Well, what ? " the man continued.

" That wretch," the landlady answered, " has had the audacity to touch my children's doll."

" So much noise about that ! " the man said ; " well, suppose that she did play with the doll ! "

" She has touched it with her dirty hands," the landlady continued, " her frightful hands."

Here Cosette redoubled her sobs.

" Will you be quiet ? " her mistress yelled.

The man went straight to the street door, opened it, and walked out : the landlady took advantage of his absence to give Cosette a kick under the table, which made her scream. The door opened again, and the man reappeared carrying in his hands the fabulous doll to which we have alluded, and which all the village children had been contemplating since the morning. He placed it on its legs before Cosette, saying,—

"Here, this is for you."

We must suppose that, during the hour he had been sitting in a reverie, he had confusedly noticed the toyman's shop, which was so brilliantly illumined with lamps and candles, that it could be seen through the taproom window like an aurora borealis. Cosette raised her eyes : she had looked at the man coming toward her with the doll as if he were the sun ; she heard the extraordinary words " it is for you : " she looked at him, looked at the doll, then drew back slowly, and concealed herself entirely in a corner under the table. She did not cry, she did not speak, but looked as if she dared hardly breathe. The landlady, Eponine, and Azelma were so many statues : the toppers themselves had stopped drinking, and there was a solemn silence in the taproom. The mother, petrified and dumb, began her conjectures again. " Who is this man ? is he poor or a millionaire ? He is, perhaps, both, that is to say, a thief." The husband's face offered that expressive wrinkle which marks the human face each time that the ruling instinct appears on it with all its bestial power. The landlord looked in turn at the doll and the traveller : he seemed to be sniffing round the man, as he would have done round a money-bag. This only lasted for a second ; then he went up to his wife and whispered,—

" That machine costs at least thirty francs. No nonsense, crawl in the dust before the man."

Coarse natures have this in common with simple natures, that they have no transitions.

" Well, Cosette," the landlady said, in a voice which strove to be gentle, and which was composed of the bitter honey of wicked women, " why don't you take your doll ? "

Cosette ventured to crawl out of her hole.

" My little Cosette," her mistress continued fawningly, " this gentleman gives you the doll, so take it, for it is yours."

Cosette gazed at the wonderful doll with a sort of terror ; her face was still bathed in tears, but her eyes were begin-

ning to fill, like the sky at dawn, with strange rays of joy. What she felt at this moment was something like what she would have felt had some one suddenly said to her, "Little girl, you are the Queen of France."

It seemed to her that if she touched this doll thunder would issue from it, and this was true to a certain point, for she said to herself that her mistress would scold and beat her. Still, the attraction gained the victory: she at length crawled up to the doll, and murmured timidly as she turned to the landlady,—

"May I, Madame?"

No expression could render this air, which was at once despairing, terrified, and ravished.

"Of course," said her mistress, "since this gentleman gives it to you."

"Is it true, sir?" Cosette continued; "is the lady really mine?"

The stranger's eyes were full of tears, and he seemed to have reached that point of emotion when a man does not speak in order that he may not weep. He nodded to Cosette, and placed the "lady's" little hand in hers. Cosette quickly drew back her hand as if the lady's burnt her, and looked down at the brick floor. We are compelled to add that at this moment she put her tongue out to an enormous length; all at once she turned and passionately seized the doll.

"I will call her Catherine," she said.

It was a strange sight when Cosette's rags met and held the doll's ribbons and fresh muslins.

"May I put her in a chair, Madame?" she continued.

"Yes, my child," her mistress answered.

It was now the turn of Eponine and Azelma to look enviously at Cosette. She placed Catherine in a chair, and then sat down on the ground before her, motionless, without saying a word, and in a contemplative attitude.

"Play, Cosette," the stranger said.

"Oh! I am playing," the child answered.

This unknown man, this stranger, who had the air of a visitor sent by Providence to Cosette, was at the

moment the person whom Madame Thénardier hated most in the world; still, she must put a constraint on herself. This emotion was more than she could endure, accustomed to dissimulation though she was by the copy which she had to take of her husband in all his actions. She hastened to send her children to bed, and then asked the yellow man's leave to send off Cosette, "who had been very tired during the day," she added with a maternal air. Cosette went off to bed carrying Catherine in her arms. The landlady went from time to time to the other end of the room, where her husband was, in order to relieve her mind. She exchanged with him a few sentences, which were the more furious because she dared not utter them aloud.

"Old ass! what has he got in his noddle to come and disturb us in this way! to wish that little monster to play! to give her dolls! dolls worth forty francs, to a wretch whom I would gladly sell for forty sous! a little more, and he would call her Your Majesty as they do to the Duchesse de Berry. Can he be in his senses? The mysterious old fellow must be cracked."

"Why so? it is very simple," Thénardier replied. "Suppose it amuses him? It amuses you that the little one should work—it amuses him to see her play. He has a right, for a traveller can do as he likes so long as he pays. If this old man is a philanthropist how does it concern you? If he is an ass, it is no business of yours. Why do you interfere, so long as he has money?"

This was the language of the master and the reasoning of a landlord, neither of which admitted a reply.

The man was resting his elbow on the table, and had resumed his thoughtful attitude; the other travellers, pedlars and carriers, had gone away or left off singing. They regarded him from a distance with a sort of respectful fear; this poorly-clad individual, who drew hind-wheels from his pocket with such ease and lavished gigantic dolls on little girls, was assuredly a magnificent and formidable man. Several hours passed, midnight mass was finished, the matin bell had been rung, the

drinkers had gone away, the pot-house was closed, the fire was out in the tap-room, but the stranger still remained at the same spot, and in the same posture. From time to time he changed the elbow on which he was leaning, that was all; but he had not uttered a syllable since Cosette went off to bed. The Thénardiens alone remained in the room, through politeness and curiosity.

"Is he going to pass the night like that?" the landlady pouted. When it struck two, she declared herself conquered, and said to her husband, "I am off to bed; you can do as you like." The husband sat down at a table in a corner, lit a candle, and began reading the *Courrier Français*. A good hour passed, during which the worthy host read the paper through thrice from the date of the number to the imprint, but the stranger did not stir. Thénardier moved, coughed, spat, and made his chair creak, but the man made no movement. "Can he be asleep?" Thénardier thought. The man was not asleep, but no movement aroused him. At length the landlord doffed his cap, walked up gently, and ventured to say,—

"Do you not wish for repose, sir?"

"To sleep" would have appeared to him excessive and familiar, while "repose" hinted at luxury, and was respectful. Such words have the mysterious and admirable quality of swelling the bill on the next morning; a room in which you sleep costs twenty sous; one in which you repose costs twenty francs.

"Why, you are right," said the stranger; "where is your stable?"

"I will show you the way, sir," Thénardier replied with a smile.

He took the candle; the man fetched his stick and bundle, and Thénardier led him to a room on the first floor, which was most luxurious, with its mahogany furniture, and the bed with its red cotton curtains.

"What is this?" the traveller asked.

"Our own wedding bedroom," the landlord replied; "my wife and I occupy another, and this room is only entered three or four times a year."

"I should have preferred the stable," the man said roughly. Thénardier pretended not to hear this disagreeable reflection, but lit two new wax candles standing on the mantelpiece. A rather large fire was flashing in the grate. Upon the mantelpiece was also a woman's head-dress, made of silver tissue and orange flowers, under a glass shade.

"And what is this?" the stranger continued.

"That, sir," Thénardier said, "is my wife's wedding bonnet."

The traveller looked at the object in a way that seemed to say, "Then there was a moment when this monster was a virgin."

This was a falsehood of Thénardier's; when he hired the house to convert it into a public, he found this room thus furnished, and bought the lot, thinking that it would cast a graceful shadow over his "spouse," and that his house would derive from it what the English call respectability. When the traveller turned round, Thénardier had disappeared, without saying good-evening, as he did not wish to treat with disrespectful cordiality a man whom he intended to flay royally the next morning. The landlord went to his room, where his wife was in bed, but not asleep. So soon as she heard her husband's footstep, she said to him,—

"You know that I mean to turn Cosette out to-morrow?"

Thénardier coldly answered,—

"How you go on."

They exchanged no more words, and in a few minutes after the candle was extinguished. For his part the stranger had placed his stick and bundle in a corner. When the landlord had withdrawn, he sat down in an easy-chair and remained pensive for a time; then he took off his shoes, seized one of the candlesticks, and left the room, looking about him as if in search of something. He went along a passage and reached the staircase; here he heard a very gentle sound, like the breathing of a child. He followed this sound, and reached a triangular

closet under the stairs, or, to speak more correctly, formed by the stairs themselves. Here among old hampers and potsherds, in dust and cobwebs, there was a bed, if we may apply the term to a palliasse so rotten as to show the straw, and a blanket so torn as to show the mattress. There were no sheets, and all this lay on the ground; in this bed Cosette was sleeping. The man walked up and gazed at her; Cosette was fast asleep and full dressed; in winter she did not take off her clothes, that she might be a little warmer. She was holding to her bosom the doll, whose large open eyes glistened in the darkness; from time to time she gave a heavy sigh, as if about to awake, and pressed the doll almost convulsively in her arms. There was nothing by her bedside but one of her wooden shoes. Through an open door close by a large dark room could be seen, through which the stranger entered. At the end, two little white beds were visible through a glass door, and which belonged to Eponine and Azelma. Behind this a wicker, curtainless cradle was half hidden, in which slept the little boy who had been crying all the evening.

The stranger conjectured that this room communicated with that of the Thénardiens. He was about to return, when his eye fell on the chimney, one of those vast inn chimneys, in which there is always so little fire when there is a frost, and which are so cold to look at. In this chimney there was no fire, not even ashes; but what there was in it attracted the traveller's attention. He saw two little child's shoes of coquettish shape and unequal size; and the traveller recollected the graceful and immemorial custom of children who place their shoe in the chimney on Christmas night, in order to obtain some glittering present from their good fairy in the darkness. Eponine and Azelma had not failed in this observance. The traveller bent down; the fairy, that is, the mother, had already paid her visit, and in each shoe a handsome ten-sous piece could be seen shining. The man rose and was going away, when he observed another object in the darkest corner of the hearth; he looked at it, and recog-



nized a hideous wooden shoe, half broken, and covered with ashes and dried mud. It was Cosette's; with the touching confidence of children who may be disappointed, but are never discouraged, she had also placed her shoe in the chimney. Hope in a child that has never known aught but despair is a sublime and affecting thing. There was nothing in this shoe; but the stranger felt in his pocket and laid a louis d'or in it; then he crept noiselessly back to his bedroom.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THÉNARDIER AT WORK.

THE next morning, almost two hours before daybreak, Thénardier was seated, pen in hand, at a table in the taproom, and making out the bill of the yellow-coated traveller. His wife, standing behind him, was watching him; they did not exchange a syllable; on one side there was a profound meditation, on the other that profound admiration with which people watch a marvel of the human mind expanding. A noise could be heard in the house; it was the Lark sweeping the stairs. At the end of a quarter of an hour and some erasures, Thénardier produced this masterpiece,—

## "THE GENT. IN NO. I.

Supper	3 frcs.
Bed	10 „
Candles	5 „
Fire	4 „
Attendance	1 „
—	—

Total 23 frcs."

"Twenty-three francs!" the wife exclaimed, with an admiration mingled with some hesitation.

Like all great artists, Thénardier was not satisfied. and said, "Pooh!" It was the accent of Castlereagh drawing up the little bill for France to pay at the Congress of Vienna.

"Monsieur Thénardier, you are right; he certainly owes it," the wife muttered, thinking of the doll given to Cosette in the presence of her children: "it is fair, but it is too much; he will not pay it."

Thénardier gave his cold laugh, and said, "He will pay it."

This laugh was the supreme signification of certainty and authority; what was said in this way must be. The wife made no objection, but began arranging the tables, while her husband walked up and down the room; a moment after he added,—

"Why, I owe fifteen hundred francs."

He sat down in the ingle-nook, meditating with his feet in the warm ashes.

"By-the-bye," the wife continued, "you don't forget that I mean to neck Cosette out to-day? The monster! she eats my heart with her doll. I would sooner marry Louis XVIII. than keep her a day longer in the house."

Thénardier lit his pipe, and said between two puffs, "You will hand the man the bill."

Then he went out, and had scarce left the room ere the traveller entered. Thénardier at once appeared behind and stood in the half-open door, only visible to his wife. The yellow man carried his stick and bundle in his hand.

"Up so soon?" the landlady said; "are you going to leave us already, sir?"

While speaking this, she turned the bill in her hands with an embarrassed air and made folds in it with her nails; her harsh face had an unusual look of timidity and scruple. It seemed to her difficult to present such a bill to a man who looked so thoroughly poor. The traveller seemed absent and preoccupied, as he replied,—

"Yes, Madame, I am going."

"Then you had no business to transact at Montfermeil, sir?" she continued.

"No, I am merely passing through, that is all. What do I owe you, Madame?"

The landlady, without replying, handed him the folded paper; he opened and looked at it, but his attention was visibly elsewhere.

"Do you do a good business here?" he asked.

"Tolerably well, sir," the landlady answered, stupefied at not seeing any other explosion; then she went on with an elegiac and lamentable accent,—

"Oh, sir, times are very bad! and then there are so few respectable people in these parts. It is lucky we have now and then generous and rich travellers like yourself, sir, for the expenses are so high. Why, that little girl costs us our eyes out of our head."

"What little girl?"

"Why, you know, Cosette, the Lark, as they call her hereabout."

"Oh!" said the man.

She continued,—

"What asses these peasants are with these nicknames! She looks more like a bat than a lark. You see, sir, we don't ask for charity, but we can't give it, our earnings are small and our expenses great. The license, the door and window-tax, and so on! You know, sir, that the Government claims a terrible deal of money. And then I have my own daughters, and do not care to support another person's child."

The man replied, in a voice which he strove to render careless, and in which there was a tremor,—

"And suppose you were freed of her?"

"Of whom?—of Cosette?"

The landlady's red and violent face was illumined by a hideous grin.

"Ah, sir, my good sir; take her, keep her, carry her off, sugar her, stuff her with truffles, eat her, drink her, and may all the Saints in Paradise bless you."

"It is settled."

"You really will take her away at once?"

"At once; call her."

"Cosette," the landlady shouted.

"In the meanwhile," the man continued, "I will pay my score; how much is it?"

He took a glance at the bill, and could not restrain a start of surprise. He looked at the landlady and said, slowly, "Twenty-three francs?" There was in his pronunciation of the two words the accent which separates the point of exclamation from the point of interrogation. Madame Thénardier had had time to prepare for the collision, and hence answered with assurance,—

"Yes, sir, twenty-three francs."

The stranger laid five five-franc pieces on the table.

"Go and fetch the girl," he said.

At this moment Thénardier walked into the middle of the room, and said,—

"The gentleman owes twenty-six sous."

"Twenty-six sous!" the wife exclaimed.

"Twenty sous for the bedroom," Thénardier continued coldly, "and six for the supper. As for the girl, I must talk a little with the gentleman first. Leave us, wife."

The landlady had one of those bedazzlements which unforeseen flashes of talent produced; she felt that the great actor had come on the stage, made no answer, and went out. So soon as they were alone, Thénardier offered the traveller a chair; he sat down, Thénardier remained standing, and his face assumed a singular expression of kindness and simplicity.

"I must tell you," he said, "sir, that I adore the child."

The stranger looked at him fixedly.

"What child?"

Thénardier continued,—

"How strange it is, but you grow attached to them. What is the meaning of all that money? Put it back in your pocket; I adore the child."

"What child?" the stranger asked.

"Why, our little Cosette! Don't you wish to take her from us? Well, I speak frankly, and as true as you are an honest man, I cannot consent. I should miss the child, for I have known her since she was a baby; it is true that she costs us money, that she has her faults, that we are not rich, and that I paid more than upwards of four hundred francs for medicines alone in one of her illnesses. She has neither father nor mother, and I brought her up; and I have bread both for her and for me. Look you, I am fond of the child; affection grows on you; I am a good, foolish fellow, and don't reason; I love the girl, and though my wife is quick, she loves her too. She is like our own child, and I want to hear her prattle in the house."

The stranger still looked at him fixedly, as he continued,—“Excuse me, sir, but a child can't be given like that to the first passer-by. You will allow that I am right? I don't say that you are not rich and look like a very worthy man, and that it may be for her welfare? but I am bound to know. You understand? Supposing that I let her go and sacrificed myself, I should like to know where she is going, and not lose her out of sight; I should wish to know where she is, and go and see her now and then, to convince the child that her foster-father is watching over her. In short, there are some things which are not possible; I don't even know your name. I ought at least to see some scrap of paper, a passport, and so on.”

The stranger, without ceasing to fix on him that look which pierces to the bottom of the conscience, said in a grave, firm voice,—

“Monsieur Thénardier, a man does not require a passport to go four leagues from Paris; and if I take Cosette away, I take her away, that is all. You will not know my name, my residence, or where she is, and it is my intention that she shall never see you again. I break the string which she has round her foot, and away she flies. Does that suit you? yes or no?”

In the same way as demons and genii recognize by certain signs the presence of a superior deity, Thénardier understood that he had to do with a very strong man. It was a sort of intuition, and he comprehended with his distinct and sagacious promptitude. On the previous evening, while drinking, smoking, and singing, he had constantly looked at the stranger, watching him like a cat, and studying him like a mathematician. He had both watched him on his own account, through pleasure and instinct, and played the spy on him as if paid to do so. Not a gesture or movement of the yellow-coated man escaped him, and even before the stranger so clearly manifested his interest in Cosette, Thénardier divined it. He surprised the profound glances of this old man which constantly reverted to the child. Why this interest? who was this man? why was his attire so wretched when his purse was so full? These questions he asked himself and could not answer them, and they irritated him; he reflected on them the whole night. He could not be Cosette's father; was he her grandfather? Then why did he not make himself known at once? When a man has a claim, he proves it, and this man evidently had no claim on Cosette. In that case, what was it? Thénardier lost himself in suppositions; he caught a gleam of everything and saw nothing. However this might be, on beginning the conversation, feeling sure that there was a secret in all this, and that the man was interested in remaining in the shadow, he felt himself strong; but on hearing the stranger's firm and distinct answer, when he saw that this mysterious person was simply mysterious, he felt himself weak. He had not expected anything of this sort, and it routed his conjectures. He rallied his ideas, and weighed all this in a second. Thénardier was one of those men who judge of a situation at a glance, and considered that it was the moment to advance straight and rapidly. He behaved like great captains at that decisive instant which they alone can recognize, and suddenly unmasked his battery.

"Sir," he said, "I want one thousand five hundred francs."

The stranger drew from his side-pocket an old black leathern portfolio, and took from it three bank-notes which he laid on the table; then he placed his large thumb on the notes, and said to the landlord,—

"Bring Cosette here."

While this was taking place, what was Cosette about? On waking, she ran to her sabot and found the gold coin in it; it was not a napoleon, but one of those new twenty-franc pieces of the Restoration, on which the Prussian queue was substituted for the crown of laurels. Cosette was dazzled, and her destiny was beginning to intoxicate her; she knew not what a gold piece was, she had never seen one, and she hurriedly hid it in her pocket, as if she had stolen it. She felt it was really hers, she guessed whence the gift came, but she experienced a feeling of joy full of fear. She was happy, but she was more stupefied; these magnificent things did not seem to her real—the doll frightened her, the gold coin frightened her, and she trembled vaguely at this magnificence. The stranger alone did not frighten her; on the contrary, he reassured her since the previous evening. Through her amazement and her sleep, she thought in her little childish mind of this man, who looked so old, and poor, and sad; and who was so rich and good. Ever since she met him in the wood, all had changed for her, as it were. Cosette, less happy than the meanest swallow, had never yet known what it is to take refuge in the shadow and beneath the wing of her mother; for five years—that is to say, so far back as her thoughts went—the poor child had trembled and shuddered. She had ever been exposed in her nudity to the bleak blast of misfortune, and she felt as if she were clothed; formerly her soul was cold, now it was warm. Cosette no longer felt afraid of her mistress, for she was no longer alone; she had some one by her side. She had set about her daily work very quickly, and the louis, which she had in the same pocket from which the fifteen-sous piece fell on the

previous night, caused her thoughts to stray. She did not dare touch it, but she looked at it for five minutes at a time. While sweeping the stairs, she stood motionless, forgetting her broom and the whole world, engaged in watching this star sparkle in her pocket: it was during one of these contemplations that her mistress came to her; by her husband's order she had come to fetch the child, and, extraordinary to say, did not strike her, or even abuse her.

"Cosette," she said, almost gently, "come directly."

A moment after, Cosette entered the tap-room. The stranger took his bundle and untied it; it contained a complete mourning dress for a child of seven years of age.

"My dear," the man said, "take these and go and dress yourself quickly."

Day was breaking, when those inhabitants of Montfermeil who were beginning to open their doors saw a poorly-clad man and a girl, holding a large doll, going along the Paris road toward Livry. No one knew the man, and few recognized Cosette in her new dress. Cosette was going away. With whom? she was ignorant. Where to? she did not know. All she understood was that she was leaving Thénardier's pot-house behind her; no one thought of saying good-bye to her, or she to any one. She left the house, hated and hating. Poor gentle being, whose heart up to this hour had only been compressed!

Cosette walked gravely, opening her large eyes and looking at the sky; she had placed her louis in the pocket of her new apron, and from time to time stooped down and looked at it, and then at her companion.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THÉNARDIER HAS ONE REGRET.

MADAME THÉNARDIER, according to her habit, had left her husband to act, and anticipated grand results.



When the man and Cosette had left, Thénardier let a good quarter of an hour elapse, then took her on one side, and showed her the fifteen hundred francs.

"Is that all?" she said.

It was the first time since her marriage that she ventured to criticize an act of her master, and the blow went home.

"You are right," he said, "and I am an ass. Give me my hat." He thrust the three notes into his pocket and went out, but he made a mistake and first turned to the right. Some neighbours of whom he inquired put him on the right track, and he walked along at a great rate, and soliloquizing.

"The man is evidently a millionaire dressed in yellow, and I am an animal. He gave first twenty sous, then five francs, then fifty francs, then fifteen hundred francs, and all with the same facility. He would have given fifteen thousand francs! but I shall catch him up." And, then, the bundle of clothes prepared beforehand was singular, and there was a mystery behind it. Now mysteries must not be let go when you hold them, for the secrets of the rich are sponges full of gold, if you know how to squeeze them. All these thoughts whirled about his brain. "I am an animal," he said. On leaving Montfermeil and reaching the angle formed by the Lagny road, you can see it running for a long distance before you upon the plateau. On getting to this point he calculated that he should see the man and child, and looked as far as he could, but saw nothing. He inquired again, and passers-by told him that the people he was looking for had gone in the direction of Gagny wood. He followed them, for, though they had the start of him, a child walks slowly. He went fast, and then, again, the country was familiar to him. All at once he stopped and smote his forehead, like a man who has forgotten the essential thing, and is ready to retrace his steps.

"I ought to have brought my gun," he said to himself. Thénardier was one of those double natures, that

pass at times among us, without our knowledge, and disappear unknown, because destiny has only shown us one side of them : it is the fate of many men to live thus half submerged. In an ordinary situation Thénardier had everything necessary to make him—we do not say to be—what is conventionally termed an honest tradesman, or a worthy citizen. At the same time, certain circumstances being given, certain shocks stirring up his nature from the bottom, he had everything required to make him a villain. He was a shopkeeper in whom there was a monster. Satan must at times crouch in a corner of the lair in which Thénardier lived, and dream before this hideous masterpiece. After a moment's hesitation he thought,—

“ Nonsense, they would have time to escape.”

And he continued his walk, going rapidly ahead and almost with an air of certainty, displaying the sagacity of a fox that scents a hare in its form. In fact, when he had passed the ponds and cut across the wide turfed glade which covers the old waterway of the Abbey de Chelles, he noticed under a shrub a hat, on which he built up many conjectures. The shrub was low, and Thénardier saw that the man and Cosette were sitting under it. The child could not be seen, but the doll's head was visible. Thénardier was not mistaken ; the man had sat down there to let the child rest a little, and the tavern-keeper dodged round the shrub and suddenly appeared before those whom he was seeking.

“ Excuse me, sir,” he said, panting, “ but here are your fifteen hundred francs.”

The man raised his eyes.

“ What is the meaning of this ? ”

Thénardier answered respectfully,—

“ It means, sir, that I am going to take Cosette back.”

The child started, and clung to the man ; the latter answered, looking fixedly at Thénardier and leaving a space between each word,—

“ You—take—Cosette—back ? ”

“ Yes, sir, I do ; and I must tell you that I have re-

flected. The truth is, that I have no right to give her to you. Look you, I am an honest man : the little one does not belong to me, but to her mother, who intrusted her to me, and I can only give her back to her mother. You will say to me, ' Her mother is dead.' Good. In that case, I can only surrender Cosette to a person who brings me a written authority from her mother. That is clear enough."

The man, without answering, felt in his pocket, and Thénardier saw the portfolio with the bank-notes reappear. He gave a start of joy.

" Good," he thought ; " I have him—he is going to bribe me."

Before opening the portfolio the traveller looked around him ; the place was utterly deserted, and there was not a soul in the wood or the valley. The man opened the pocketbook and took out, not the handful of bank-notes which Thénardier anticipated, but a simple sheet of paper, which he opened and handed to the landlord, saying, " You are right : read."

Thénardier took the paper and read.

" M. SUR M., *March 25, 1823.*

" MONSIEUR THÉNARDIER,—You will hand over Cosette to the bearer, who will pay up little matters.—Yours,

" FANTINE."

" Do you know the signature ? " the man continued.

It was really Fantine's, and Thénardier recognized it, and had no reply. He felt a double annoyance, first at having to renounce the bribery which he expected, and, secondly, that of being beaten. The man added,—

" You can keep that paper as your discharge."

Thénardier folded it up neatly, and growled, " The signature is tolerably well imitated. Well, be it so."

Then he attempted a desperate effort.

" So far so good, sir, since you are the bearer ; but the expenses must be paid, and there is a heavy sum owing me."

The man rose, and said as he dusted his threadbare cuff, "Monsieur Thénardier, in January the mother calculated that she owed you 120 francs; in February you sent in an account of 500 francs; you received 300 at the end of that month, and 300 more early in March. Since then nine months have elapsed at the agreed on price of 15 francs, which makes 135 francs. You had received 100 francs too much, so this leaves 35 francs owing you, and I have just given you 1,500."

Thénardier felt just like the wolf when it is caught by the leg in a steel trap.

"Who in the fiend's name is this man?" he thought.

He behaved like the wolf: he shook himself: impudence had carried him through before now.

"Monsieur, I don't know your name," he said boldly, and putting off his respectful manner; "if you do not give me 3,000 francs I shall take Cosette back."

The stranger said quietly, "Come, Cosette." He took the child by his left hand, and with the right picked up his stick. Thénardier noticed the enormity of the stick and the solitude of the spot; the man buried himself in the wood, leaving the landlord motionless and confounded. As he walked away Thénardier regarded his broad shoulders and enormous fists, then his eye fell on his own thin arms. "I must have been a fool," he said, "not to bring my gun, as I was going to the chase."

Still the tavern-keeper did not give in. "I will know where he goes," he said, and began following them at a distance. Two things remained in his hands, irony in the shape of the scrap of paper signed Fantine, and a consolation in the 1,500 francs. The man led Cosette in the direction of Bondy: he walked slowly, with drooping head and in a pensive attitude. Winter had rendered the wood transparent, and hence Thénardier did not lose them out of sight, while keeping some distance off. From time to time the man turned round and looked to see whether he were followed, and suddenly perceived Thénardier. He drew Cosette into a clump of trees, in which they both disappeared. "Confusion!"

said Thénardier, as he doubled his pace. The closeness of the trees compelled him to draw nearer to them, and when the man was at the thickest part he turned round and saw Thénardier, although the latter tried to conceal himself behind a stem. The man gave him a restless glance, then tossed his head and continued his walk. Thénardier followed him, but, after going some two hundred yards, the man turned and looked at him so menacingly that the landlord thought it useless to go any further, and turned back.

On the evening of the day on which Jean Valjean drew Cosette from the claws of the Thénardiens he re-entered Paris. At nightfall he passed through the Barrière de Monceaux with the child, and got into a cabriolet which conveyed him to the Esplanade of the Observatory. Here he got down, and the pair proceeded in the darkness toward the Boulevard de l'Hôpital. The day had been strange and full of emotions for Cosette : they had eaten behind hedges bread and cheese bought at isolated wine-shops ; they had often changed vehicles, and gone a distance on foot. She did not complain, but she felt tired, and Jean Valjean perceived it by her hand, which dragged more and more. He took her on his back, and Cosette, without letting loose of Catherine, laid her head on his shoulder and fell asleep.

## BOOK IV.

### CHAPTER I.

#### MASTER GORBEAU.

Forty years ago the solitary walker who ventured into the lost districts of the Salpêtrière, and went up the Boulevard as far as the Barrière d'Italie, reached a quarter where it might be said that Paris disappeared. It was not solitude, for there were passers-by; it was not the country, for there were houses and streets; it was not a town, for the streets had ruts as large as those in the highroads, and grass grew in them; and it was not a village, for the houses were too lofty. What was it then? It was an inhabited place where there was nobody, a deserted spot where there was somebody; it was a boulevard of the great city, a street of Paris, more ferocious at night than a forest, more gloomy by day than a cemetery. It was the old quarter of the Marché-aux-Chevaux. The Rambler, if he risked himself beyond the tottering walls of the market, if he even consented to pass the Rue du Petit Banquier, reached the corner of the Rue des Vignes St. Marcel, a but little known latitude, after leaving on his right a garden protected by high walls, next a field in which stood tan mills, resembling gigantic beaver dams, next an enclosure encumbered with planks, tree-stumps, sawdust, and chips, on the top of which a large dog barked; then a long low wall, all in ruins, with a small, decrepit back gate, covered with moss, which burst into flower in spring, and lastly,

in the most desolate spot, a hideous and decrepit building, on which could be read in large letters **STICK NO BILLS**. Here, close to a foundry, and between two garden walls, could be seen, at the time of which we write, a poorhouse, which, at the first glance, seemed small as a cottage, but was in reality large as a cathedral. It turned its gable end to the public thoroughfare, and hence came its apparent smallness; nearly the whole house was concealed, and only a door and a window could be perceived.

This house was only one storey high. On examining it, the first fact that struck you was that the door could never have been other than that of a low lodging-house, while the window, had it been carved in stone instead of made of stucco, might have belonged to a mansion. The door was nothing but a collection of worm-eaten planks, clumsily held together by roughly-planed cross beams. It opened immediately on a steep staircase, muddy, dirty, and dusty, of the same width as itself, which could be seen from the street mounting steep as a ladder, and disappearing in the gloom between two walls. The top of the clumsy opening in which the door stood was masked by a thin deal plank, in which a triangular hole had been cut. On the inside of the door a brush dipped in ink had clumsily traced No. 52, while over the skylight the same brush had painted No. 50, so people hesitated. Dust-coloured rags hung like a drapery over the triangular skylight. The window was wide, tolerably lofty, filled with large panes of glass, and protected by Venetian shutters; but these panes had various wounds, at once concealed and betrayed by an ingenious bandage of paper, and the Venetian shutters, broken and hanging from their hinges, threatened passers-by more than they protected the inhabitants. The horizontal screen-boards were wanting here and there, and these places had been filled up with boards nailed on perpendicularly: so that the affair began by being a Venetian screen, and ended by being a shutter. This door, which had an unclean look, and this window, which looked honest, though fallen in the world, produced the effect of two

beggars walking side by side with two different faces under the same rags, the one having always been a mendicant, while the other had once been a gentleman. The staircase led to a very large building, which resembled a shed which had been converted into a house. This building had, as its intestinal tube, a long passage, upon which opened, right and left, compartments of various dimensions, habitable at a pinch, and more like booths than cells. These rooms looked out on the dreary landscape around ; all was dark, wearisome, dull, melancholy, and sepulchral, and traversed, according as the cracks were in the roof or the door by cold sunbeams or sharp draughts. • An interesting and picturesque peculiarity of houses of this description is the enormous size of the cobwebs. To the left of the door, on the boulevard, and at about six feet from the ground, a bricked-up window formed a square hole filled by passing lads with stones. A portion of this building has been recently demolished, but what still remains will allow an idea to be formed of what it was. The whole affair is not more than a century old ; one hundred years are the youth of a church and the old age of a human abode. It seems as if the house of man shares his brief tenure, and the House of GOD His eternity. The postman called this house No. 50-52, but it was known in the quarter by the name of Maison Gorbeau. Let us state whence this title came.

The collectors of things not generally known, who made anecdotal herbals, and prick fugacious dates into their memory with a pin, know that there were in Paris, about the year 1770, two advocates at the Châtelet of the names of Corbeau and Renard—two names foreseen by Lafontaine. The opportunity was too good to be neglected, and ere long the following parody, in rather halting verse, was in everybody's mouth :

“ Maître Corbeau, sur un dossier perché,  
Tenait dans son bec une saisie exécutoire;  
Maître Renard, par l'odeur alléché,  
Lui fit à peu près cette histoire :  
Eh, bonjour, etc.”



The two honest lawyers, who were unable to hold their heads up under the outburst of laughter that followed them, resolved to get rid of their names, and for that purpose appealed to the king. The petition was handed to Louis XV. on the very day when the Papal Nuncio kneeling on one side, and Cardinal de la Roche Aymon on the other, were drawing the slippers on to the bare feet of Madame du Barry, who had just left her couch. The king, who was laughing, continued to laugh, gaily passed from the two bishops to the two lawyers, and forgave them their names, or nearly so. By royal authority Master Corbeau was allowed to add a tail to his initial letter and become Gorbeau; but Master Renard was less fortunate—he could only obtain leave to place a P before his R, and call himself Prenard,\* so that the latter name was nearly as significant as the first. Now, according to local tradition, Master Gorbeau had been owner of the building numbered 50-52, on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital, and was even author of the grand window. Opposite the house there stands, amid the Boulevard trees, an elm which is nearly three parts dead; a little further on is the Rue de la Barrière des Gobelins, a street at that time without houses, unpaved, planted with badly-growing trees, and which ran straight down to the city walls. A smell of vitriol issues in puffs from the roof of an adjacent manufactory. The barrier was close by, and in 1823 the city walls were still in existence. The barrier itself cast a gloom over the mind, for it was on the road to Bicêtre. Under the Empire and the Restoration men condemned to death returned to Paris through it on the day of their execution. Here was committed, about the year 1820, that mysterious assassination called "the murder of the Barrière de Fontainebleau," a frightful problem which has never been elucidated, a mournful enigma which has never been solved. A few steps further on you come to the fatal Rue Croulebarbe, in which Ulbach stabbed the woman who looked after the Ivory goats to the sound of thunder, as in a

\* Prenard=a greedy fellow.

melodrama. A few more steps and you reach the abominable pollard-elms of the Barrière Saint Jacques, that philanthropic expedient concealing the scaffold, the paltry, disgraceful Place de Grève of a shopkeeping society, which has recoiled before the penalty of death, though not daring to abolish it with grandeur or keep it up with authority. Thirty-seven years ago, and leaving aside this plate St. Jacques, which was, as it were, predestined, and has always been horrible, the gloomiest point perhaps of all this gloomy Boulevard was that where No. 50-52 stood. Tradespeople did not begin to settle there till five-and-twenty years later. The place was morose, for you felt yourself between La Salpêtrière, whose dome was just visible, and Bicêtre, whose barrier you could touch ; that is to say, between male and female mania. As far as the eye could reach nothing was visible save the slaughter-houses, the city wall, and a few rare frontages of foundries, resembling barracks, or monasteries. Everywhere were sheds and rubbish, old walls black as coffins, new walls white as winding-sheets ; everywhere parallel rows of trees, buildings standing in rows, long odd lines, and the gloomy sadness of right angles. There was not a diversity of the soil, not a single architectural whim ; the *ensemble* was freezing, regular, and hideous. Nothing contracts the heart like symmetry, because symmetry is ennui, and ennui is the basis of mourning, a yawning despair. It is possible to imagine something more horrible than an Inferno in which people suffer ; it is one in which they are ennuyés. If such an Inferno existed, this section of the Boulevard de l'Hôpital might be its avenue.

At nightfall, at the moment when light disappears, and before all in winter, at the hour when the evening breeze is tearing from the elms their last rusty leaves ; when the darkness is profound and starless, and when the moon and the wind make rents in the clouds, this Boulevard became really terrifying. The black outlines were lost in the gloom, and the passer-by could not refrain from thinking of the countless gallows traditions of the spot.

This solitude, in which so many crimes had been committed, had something awful about it ; traps could almost be foreseen in the darkness, all the confused shapes of the darkness appeared suspicious, and the long, hollow squares noticed between the trees seemed graves. By day it was ugly, in the evening lugubrious, and at night sinister. In the summer twilight a few old women might be seen sitting under the elms upon raw, rotted benches ; these worthy old ladies had a partiality for begging. Even at the time of which we write, however, this quarter, which looked more superannuated than ancient, was striving to transform itself, and any one who wished to see it was obliged to make haste, for each day some detail disappeared from the *ensemble*. For the last twenty years the Orleans railway station has been by the side of the old faubourg, and has worked it up ; for wherever a station is built on the skirt of a capital it is the death of a suburb and the birth of a town. Round these centres of popular movement, at the rolling of these mighty machines, under the breath of these monstrous horses of civilization, which devour coal and sort fire, the earth trembles, and opens to swallow up the old abodes of men and bring forth new ones ; the old houses crumble away, and new ones rise in their place.

From the day when the Orleans railway station invaded the territory of the Salpêtrière, the old narrow streets that border the Jardin des Plantes have been shaken down, traversed as they are three or four times a day by those currents of diligences, hackney coaches, and omnibuses, which, within a given time, drive back the houses on both sides : for it is a curious though perfectly true fact that, just as in large capitals the sun makes the fronts of houses grow and expand to the south, the frequent passing of vehicles widens streets. The symptoms of a new life are visible in the remotest corners of this old provincial district ; pavement is being laid down, and is beginning to extend to spots where there are as yet no wayfarers. One memorable morning in July, 1845, the bitumen cauldrons were suddenly seen

smoking there; and on that day it may be said that civilization reached the Rue de l'Oursine, and that Paris entered the Faubourg St. Marceau.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE NEST OF AN OWL AND A LINNET.

JEAN VALJEAN stopped before No. 50-52. Like the bird of night, he had selected this deserted spot in which to build his nest. He felt in his pocket, took out a latch-key, opened and carefully shut the door again, and went upstairs, still carrying Cosette on his back. When he reached the landing he took from his pocket a key, with which he opened another door. The room he entered was a sort of spacious garret, furnished with a mattress laid on the ground, a table, and a few chairs. There was a burning stove in the corner, and the boulevard lamp faintly illumined this poor interior. At the end of the room was a closet with a poor bedstead, to which Jean Valjean carried the child and laid her on it, without awaking her. He struck a light and lit a candle—all this had been prepared on the previous day—and he then began gazing at Cosette with a look full of ecstasy, in which the expression of kindness and tenderness almost attained delirium. The little girl, with that calm confidence which only appertains to extreme strength and extreme weakness, had fallen asleep without knowing with whom she was, and continued to sleep without knowing where she was. Jean Valjean bent down and kissed the child's hand. Nine months previously he had kissed her mother's hand, who had also just fallen asleep, and the same painful, religious, poignant feeling filled his heart. He knelt down by the side of Cosette's bed.

Long after daybreak the child was still asleep. A pale beam of the December sun filtered through the window and made large strips of light and shadow on the ceiling.

Suddenly a heavily-laden waggon, passing along the Boulevard, shook the house like a blast of wind, and made it tremble from top to bottom.

"Yes, Madame," Cosette cried, waking with a start, "I am coming directly."

And she jumped out of bed, her eyelids still half closed by the weight of sleep, and stretched out her arms to a corner of the wall.

"Oh, goodness, my broom!" she said.

She opened her eyes thoroughly, and saw Jean Valjean's smiling face.

"Ah, it is true," the child said. "Good-morning, sir."

Children accept at once and familiarly joy and happiness, for they are themselves by nature happiness and joy. Cosette saw Catherine at the foot of her bed, caught her up, and while playing, asked Jean Valjean a hundred questions: "Where was she? was Paris large? was Madame Thénardier a long way off? and would she never return?" etc., etc., etc. All at once she exclaimed, "How pretty it is here!"

It was a frightful hole, but she felt herself free.

"Must I sweep?" she at length continued.

"Play," said Jean Valjean.

The day passed in this way, and Cosette, not feeling any anxiety at understanding nothing, was inexpressibly happy between her doll and this good man.

### CHAPTER III.

#### TWO EVILS MAKE A GOOD.

THE next morning at daybreak Jean Valjean was again standing by Cosette's bedside; he was motionless and waiting for her to awake; something new was entering his soul. Jean Valjean had never loved anything. For twenty-five years he had been alone in the world, and

had never been father, lover, husband, or friend. At the galleys he was wicked, gloomy, chaste, ignorant, and ferocious—the heart of the old convict was full of virginities. His sister and his sister's children had only left in him a vague and distant reminiscence, which in the end entirely faded away: he had made every effort to find them again, and, not being able to do so, forgot them—human nature is thus constituted. The other tender emotions of his youth, if he had any, had fallen into an abyss. When he saw Cosette, when he carried her off, he felt his bowels of pity stirred: all the passion and affection there was in him was aroused and rushed towards this child. He went up to the bed on which she slept, and he trembled with joy: he felt pangs like a mother, and knew not what it was, for the great and strange emotion of a heart which is preparing to love is a very obscure and sweet thing. Still, as he was fifty-five years of age, and Cosette eight, all the love he might have felt during life was melted into a species of ineffable glow. This was the second white apparition he met: the Bishop had caused the dawn of virtue to rise on his horizon, and Cosette now produced that of love.

The first days passed in this bedazzlement. On her side Cosette became unconsciously different, poor little creature! She was so little when her mother left her that she did not remember; and like all children, who resemble the young vine-twigs that cling to everything, she tried to love, and had not succeeded. All had repulsed her, the Thénardiens, their children, and other children; she had loved the dog which died, and after that nothing and nobody would have anything to do with her. It is a sad thing to say, but at the age of eight she had a cold heart; it was not her fault, it was not that she lacked the faculty of loving, but it was, alas! the possibility. Hence, from the first day, all that felt and thought within her began to love the good man; and she experienced what she had never known before, a feeling of expansion. The man no longer even produced the effect upon her of being old or poor; she

## LES MISÉRABLES.

found Jean Valjean handsome, in the same way as she found the garret pretty. Such are the effects of dawn, childhood, youth, and joy. The novelty of earth and life has something to do in it, and nothing is so charming as the colouring reflection of happiness upon an attic ; in this way we have all a blue garret in our past. Nature had placed a profound interval, of fifty years, between Jean Valjean and Cosette ; but destiny, filled up this separation. Destiny suddenly united, and affianced with its irresistible power, these two uprooted existences so different in age, so similar in sorrow, and the one, in fact, was the complement of the other. Cosette's instinct sought a father, in the same way as Jean Valjean's sought a child, and to meet was to find each other. At the mysterious moment when their two hands clasped they were welded together, and when their two souls saw each other they recognized that each was necessary to the other, and joined in a close embrace. Taking the words in their most comprehensive and absolute meaning, we may say that, separated from everything by the walls of the tombs, Jean Valjean was the Widower as Cosette was the Orphan, and this situation caused Jean Valjean to become in a celestial manner Cosette's father. And, in truth, the mysterious impression produced upon Cosette in the Chelles wood by Jean Valjean's hand grasping hers in the darkness was not an illusion but a reality.

Jean Valjean had selected his asylum well ; and in a security which might appear perfect. The room he occupied with Cosette was the one whose window looked out on the Boulevard, and as it was the only one of the sort in the house, he had not to fear the curiosity of neighbours, either in front or on his side. The ground-floor of 50-52, a sort of rickety pentice, was employed as a tool-house by nursery-gardeners, and had no communication with the first floor. The latter, as we have said, contained several rooms, and a few garrets, one of which alone was occupied by the old woman, who looked after Jean Valjean. It was this old woman who was known as the chief lodger, and who in reality performed

## COSETTE.

the duties of porter, that let him the room on Christmas day. He had represented himself as an annuitant ruined by the Spanish bonds, who meant to live there with his little daughter. He paid six months' rent in advance, and requested the old woman to furnish the room in the way we have seen, and it was this woman who lit the stove and prepared everything on the evening of their arrival. Weeks passed away, and these two beings led a happy life in this wretched garret. With the dawn Cosette began laughing, chattering, and singing, for children, like the birds, have their matin song. At times it happened that Jean Valjean took her little red chilblained hand, and kissed it; the poor child, accustomed to be beaten, did not know what this meant, and went away quite ashamed. At one moment she became serious, and looked at her little black frock. Cosette was no longer dressed in rags, but in mourning; she had left wretchedness, and was entering life. Jean Valjean set to work teaching her to read. At times he thought that it was with the idea of doing evil that he learned to read at the galleys, and this idea had turned to teaching a child to read. Then the old galley-slave smiled the pensive smile of the angels. He felt in it a premeditation of heaven, and he lost himself in a reverie, for good thoughts have their depths as well as the wicked. Teaching Cosette to read, and letting her play, almost constituted Jean Valjean's entire life; and then, he spoke to her about her mother, and made her play. She called him "father," and knew him by no other name. He spent hours in watching her dress and undress her doll, and listening to her prattle. From this moment life appeared to him full of interest; men seemed to him good and just; he no longer reproached any one in his thoughts, and perceived no reason why he should not live to a great age, now that this child loved him. He saw a future illumined by Cosette, as by a delicious light; and as the best men are not exempt from a selfish thought, he said to himself at times joyfully that she would be ugly.



Although it is only a personal opinion, we fancy that at the point which Jean Valjean had reached when he began to love Cosette, he required this fresh impulse to continue in the right path. He had just seen, under new aspects, the wickedness of men and the wretchedness of society, but the aspects were incomplete, and only fatally showed him one side of the truth—the fate of woman comprised in Fantine, and public authority personified in Javert ; he had returned to the galleys, but this time for acting justly ; he had drunk the new cup of bitterness to the dregs ; disgust and weariness seized upon him ; the very recollection of the Bishop was approaching an eclipse, and though it would have perhaps reappeared afterwards luminous and triumphant, still this holy recollection was beginning to fade. Who knows whether Jean Valjean was not on the eve of growing discouraged and relapsing ? But he loved and became strong again. Alas ! he was no less tottering than Cosette ; he protected her and she strengthened him ; through him, she was able to advance in her life ; through her, he could continue in the path of virtue. Oh unfathomable and divine mystery of the equilibrium of destiny !

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE REMARKS OF THE CHIEF LODGER.

JEAN VALJEAN was so prudent as never to go out by day ; every evening he walked out for an hour or two, sometimes alone, but generally with Cosette in the most retired streets, and entering the churches at nightfall. When he did not take Cosette with him, she remained with the old woman, but it was her delight to go out with him. She preferred an hour with him to the ravishing *têtes-à-têtes* with Catherine. He walked along holding her by the hand, and talking pleasantly with her, for Cosette's temper turned to be extremely gay.

The old woman cleaned, cooked, and bought food for them ; they lived quietly, always having a little fire, but as if they were very poor. Jean Valjean had made no change in the furniture since the first day, except that he had a wooden door put up in place of the glass door in Cosette's sleeping closet. He still wore his yellow coat, black breeches, and old hat, and in the streets he was taken for a poor man. It happened at times that charitable women turned and gave him a sou, which Jean Valjean accepted with a deep bow. It happened at times also that he met some wretch asking for charity ; in such a case he looked behind him to see that no one was watching, furtively approached the beggar, gave him money, now and then silver, and hurried away. This entailed inconveniences, for people began to know him in the district under the name of the alms-giving beggar. The old chief lodger, a spiteful creature, full of envy and uncharitableness toward her neighbours, watched him closely, though he did not suspect it. She was rather deaf, which rendered her prone to gossip, and there remained to her from the past two teeth, one atop and one at bottom, which she constantly rattled against each other. She questioned Cosette, who, knowing nothing, could say nothing except that she came from Montfermeil. One day this spy saw Jean Valjean go into one of the uninhabited rooms in a way that seemed to her peculiar. She followed him with the stealthy step of an old cat, and was able to watch him, herself unseen, through the crack of the door, to which Jean Valjean turned his back, doubtless as a greater precaution. She saw him take out of his pocket a pair of scissors, needle, and thread, and then begin ripping up the lining of his coat, and pull out a piece of yellow paper, which he unfolded. The woman recognized with horror that it was a thousand-franc note, the second or third she had seen in her life, and she fled in terror. A moment after Jean Valjean addressed her, and requested her to change the note for him, adding that it was his half-year's dividend, which he had received on the previous day.

"When?" the old woman thought; "he did not go out till six in the evening, and the Bank is certainly not open at that hour." The old woman went to change the note and made her conjectures; the amount of money being considerably multiplied afforded a grand topic of conversation for the gossips of the neighbourhood.

A few days after it happened that Jean Valjean, in his shirt sleeves, was chopping wood in the passage, and the old woman was in his room cleaning up. She was alone, for Cosette was admiring the wood-chopping. She saw the coat hanging on a nail, and investigated it. The lining had been sewn up again, but the good woman felt it carefully, and fancied she could notice folds of paper between the cloth and the lining. More bank-notes, of course! She also noticed that there were all sorts of things in the pockets; not only the needles, scissors, and thread she had seen, but a large portfolio, a big clasp knife, and, most suspicious fact of all, several different coloured wigs. Each pocket of this coat seemed to be a species of safeguard against unexpected events.

The inhabitants of the house thus reached the last days of winter.

## CHAPTER V.

### A NEW TENANT.

THERE was near St. Medard's church a poor man who usually sat on the edge of a condemned well, to whom Jean Valjean liked to give alms. He never passed him without giving him a trifle, and at times spoke to him. The persons who envied this beggar said that he belonged to the police, and he was an ex-beadle seventy-five years of age, who was constantly telling his beads. One evening when Jean Valjean passed along, he perceived the beggar at his usual place under the lamp which had just been lit. The man, according to his habit, seemed to be

praying and was crouched. Jean Valjean went up to him and placed his usual charity in his hand, and the beggar suddenly raised his eyes, looked fixedly at Jean Valjean, and then let his head hang again. This movement was like a flash, but Jean Valjean gave a start; he fancied that he had seen by the flickering light of the lamp, not the placid and devout face of the old beadle, but a terrifying and familiar face. He had such a feeling as he would have had had he suddenly found himself face to face with a tiger in the darkness. He recoiled, terrified and petrified, not daring to breathe, remain, or fly, staring at the beggar, who had let his head fall, and did not appear to know that he was there. At this strange moment, an instinct, perhaps that of self-preservation, urged Valjean not to utter a syllable. The beggar was of the same height, wore the same rags, and looked as he did every day. "Stuff," said Valjean, "I am mad, dreaming; it is impossible!" And he went home sorely troubled in mind. He hardly dared confess to himself that the face which he fancied he had seen was Javert's. At night, on reflecting, he regretted that he had not spoken to the man, and made him raise his head a second time. The next evening he returned and found the beggar at his seat. "Good-day, my man," Jean Valjean said resolutely, as he gave him a sou. The beggar raised his head and replied in a complaining voice, "Thank you, my good gentleman." It was certainly the old beadle. Jean Valjean felt fully reassured, and began laughing. "How on earth could I have thought that it was Javert? Why, am I now to grow wool-gathering?" and he thought no more of it.

A few days later, at about eight in the evening, he was giving Cosette a spelling lesson, when he heard the house door open and then close again. This appeared to him singular, for the old woman, who alone lived in the house beside himself, always went to bed at nightfall to save candle. Jean Valjean made Cosette a sign to be silent, for he heard some one coming upstairs. After all it might be

the old woman, who felt unwell, and had been to the chemist's. Jean Valjean listened; the footstep was heavy and sounded like a man's, but the old woman wore thick shoes, and nothing so closely resembles a man's footstep as an old woman's. For all that, though, Jean Valjean blew out his candle. He had sent Cosette to bed, saying in a whisper, "Make no noise," and while he was kissing her forehead the footsteps stopped. Jean Valjean remained silently in his chair, with his back turned to the door, and holding his breath in the darkness. After a long interval, hearing nothing more, he turned noiselessly, and, on looking at his door, saw a light through the key-hole, which formed a sort of a sinister star in the blackness of the door and the wall. There was evidently some one there holding a candle in his hand and listening. A few minutes passed, and then the light went away; still he did not hear the sound of footsteps, which seemed to indicate that the man who came to listen had taken off his shoes. Jean Valjean threw himself full-dressed on his bed, and could not close his eyes all night. At daybreak, when he was just yielding to fatigue, he was aroused by the creaking of a door which opened into a room at the end of the passage, and then heard the same footstep which had ascended the stairs the previous evening drawing nearer. He put his eye to the key-hole, which was rather large, in the hope of seeing the man who had listened at his door over-night. It was really a man, who this time passed Jean Valjean's door without stopping. The passage was still too dark for him to distinguish his face; but when the man reached the staircase a ray of light from outside fell upon him, and Jean Valjean saw his back perfectly. He was a tall man, dressed in a long coat, with a cudgel under his arm; and he was very like Javert. Valjean might have tried to see him on the Boulevard through his window, but for that purpose he must have opened it, and that he dared not do. It was plain that this man came in with a key and was quite at home. Who gave him this key? what did it mean? At seven o'clock, when the old woman came to clean up, Jean Valjean gave her a piercing glance, but did

not question her. The good woman was as calm as usual, and while sweeping she said to him,—

"I suppose you heard some one come in last night, sir?"

At that age, and on that Boulevard, eight in the evening is the blackest night.

"Yes, I remember," he said, with the most natural accent: "who was it?"

"A new lodger in the house."

"What is his name?"

"I forget: Dumont or Daumont, something like that."

"And what may he be?"

The old woman looked at him with her little ferret eyes, and answered,—

"He lives on his property, like yourself."

Perhaps she meant nothing, but Jean Valjean fancied that he could detect a meaning. When the old woman had gone off he made a rouleau of some hundred francs which he had in a chest of drawers and put it in his pocket. Whatever precautions he took to keep the money from rattling, a five-franc piece fell from his hand and rolled noisily on the floor. At nightfall he went down and looked attentively all along the Boulevard: he saw nobody, and it seemed utterly deserted. It is true that some one might have been concealed behind the trees, He went up again, and said to Cosette, "Come!" He took her hand and both left the house together.

## BOOK V.

### CHAPTER I.

#### STRATEGIC ZIGZAGS.

JEAN VALJEAN at once left the Boulevard and entered the streets, making as many turnings as he could, and at times retracing his steps to make sure that he was not followed. This manœuvre is peculiar to the tracked deer, and on ground where traces are left it possesses the advantage of deceiving huntsmen and dogs; in venery it is called a "false reimbushment." The moon was at its full, and Jean Valjean was not sorry for it, for as the luminary was still close to the horizon it formed large patches of light and shade in the streets. Valjean was able to slip along the houses and walls on the dark side and watch the bright side; perhaps he did not reflect sufficiently that the dark side escaped his notice. Still, in the deserted lanes which border the Rue de Poliveau he felt certain that no one was following him. Cosette walked on without asking questions; the sufferings of the first six years of her life had introduced something passive into her nature. Moreover—and this is a remark to which we shall have to revert more than once—she was accustomed to the singularities of her companion, and the strange mutations of fate. And then she felt in safety as she was with him. Jean Valjean did not know any more than Cosette whither he was going; he trusted to God, as she trusted to him. He fancied that he also held some one greater than himself by the hand, and felt an invisible guiding him. However, he had no settled idea,

plan, or scheme ; he was not absolutely certain that it was Javert ; and then again it might be Javert ignorant that he was Jean Valjean. Was he not disguised ? Was he not supposed to be dead ? Still, during the last few days several things had occurred which were becoming singular, and he wanted nothing more. He was resolved not to return to No. 50-52, and, like the animal driven from its lair, he sought a hole in which to hide himself until he could find a lodging. Jean Valjean described several labyrinths in the Quartier Mouffetard, which was as fast asleep as if it were still under mediæval discipline and the yoke of the Curfew, and combined several streets into a clever strategic system. There were lodging-houses where he now was, but he did not enter them, as he did not find anything to suit him, and he did not suppose for a moment that if persons were on his trail they had lost it again.

As the clock of St. Etienne du Mont struck eleven he passed the police office at No. 14, in the Rue de Pontoise. A few minutes after, the instinct to which we have referred made him look round, and he distinctly saw, by the office lamp which betrayed them, three men, who were following him rather closely, pass in turn under this lamp on the dark side of the street. One of these men turned into the office, and another, who was in front, appeared to him decidedly suspicious.

"Come, child," he said to Cosette, and he hastened out of the Rue de Pontoise. He made a circuit, skirted the Passage des Patriarches, which was closed at that hour, and eventually turned into the Rue des Postes. There is an open space here, where the Rollin College now stands, and into which the Rue Neuve St. Geneviève runs.

We need hardly say that the Rue Neuve St. Geneviève is an old street, and that a post-chaise does not pass along the Rue des Postes once in ten years. This street was inhabited by potters in the 13th century, and its real name is Rue des Pots.

The moon threw a bright light upon this open space, and Jean Valjean hid himself in a doorway, calculating that if the men were still following him he could not fail to have



a good look at them as they crossed the open space. In fact, three minutes had not elapsed when the men appeared. There were now four of them, all tall, dressed in long brown coats and round hats, and holding large sticks in their hands. They were no less alarming through their stature and huge fists, than through their sinister movements in the darkness; they looked like four spectres disguised as citizens. They stopped in the centre of the square, and formed a group as if consulting, and apparently undecided. The leader turned and pointed with his right hand in the direction Jean Valjean had taken, while another seemed to be pointing with some degree of obstinacy in the opposite direction. At the moment when the first man turned the moon lit up his face brilliantly, and Jean Valjean recognized Javert perfectly.

Uncertainty ceased for Jean Valjean; but fortunately it still lasted with the men. He took advantage of their hesitation, for it was time lost by them and gained by him. He left the gateway in which he was concealed, and pushed on along the Rue des Postes toward the region of the Jardin des Plantes. As Cosette was beginning to feel tired, he took her in his arms and carried her. No one was passing, and the lamps had not been lit on account of the moon. He doubled his pace, and in a few strides reached the Goblet pottery, on the front of which the moonshine made the old inscription distinctly visible:

"Du Goblet fils c'est ici la fabrique :  
Venez choisir des cruches et des brocs :  
Des pots à fleurs, des tuyaux, de la brique,  
A tout venant le Cœur vend des Carreaux."

He left behind him the Rue de la Clef, skirted the Jardin des Plantes, and reached the quay. Here he turned; the quay was deserted, the streets were deserted. There was no one behind him, and he breathed again. He reached the Austerlitz bridge, where a toll still existed at the time, and he handed the tollman a sou.

"It is two sous," said the man; "you are carrying a child who can walk, so you must pay for two."

He paid, though greatly vexed that his passing had

given rise to any remark. A heavy wain was passing the river at the same time as himself, and also proceeding to the right bank. This was useful for him as he could cross the whole of the bridge in its shadow. On reaching the arches of the bridge, Cosette, whose feet were numbed, asked to be put down ; he did so, and took her by the hand again. After crossing the bridge, he saw a little to his right building-yards, towards which he proceeded. In order to reach them he must cross an open brilliantly-lighted space, but he did not hesitate. His pursuers were evidently thrown out, and Jean Valjean believed himself out of danger ; he might be looked for, but he was not followed. A little street, the Rue du Chemin Vert Saint Antoine, ran between two timber-yards ; it was narrow, dark, and seemed expressly made for him, but before entering it he looked back. From the spot where he was he could see the whole length of the bridge of Austerlitz ; four shadows had just come upon it, and were walking toward the right bank. Jean Valjean gave a start like a recaptured animal ; one hope was left him ; it was that the four men had not been upon the bridge at the moment when he crossed the large illumined space with Cosette. In that case, by entering the little street before him, he might escape, if he could reach the timber-yards, kitchen-gardens, fields, and land not yet built on. He fancied that he could trust to this little silent street, and entered it.

## CHAPTER II.

## CONSULT THE PLAN OF PARIS IN 1727.

AFTER going three hundred yards he came to a spot where the road formed two forks, and Jean Valjean had before him, as it were, the two branches of a Y. Which should he choose ? He did not hesitate, but took the right one, because the other ran towards the faubourg, that is to say, inhabited parts, while the right branch went in the direc-

tion of the country, or deserted parts. Still they did not walk very rapidly, for Cosette checked Jean Valjean's pace, and hence he began carrying her again, and Cosette laid her head on his shoulder and did not say a word. At times he looked back, while careful to keep on the dark side of the street. The first twice or thrice that he turned he saw nothing; the silence was profound, and he continued his walk with a little more confidence. All at once, on turning suddenly, he fancied that he saw something moving on the dark part of the street which he had just passed. He rushed forward rather than walked, hoping to find some side lane by which he could escape and once again break his trail. He reached a wall, which, however, did not render further progress impossible, for it was a wall skirting a cross lane, into which the street Jean Valjean had entered ran. Here he must make his mind up again whether to turn to the right or left. He looked to the right; the lane ran for some distance between buildings, which were barns or sheds, and then stopped. The end of the blind alley, a tall white wall, was distinctly visible. He looked to the left; on this side the lane was open, and at a distance of about two hundred yards fell into a street, of which it was an affluent. On that side safety lay. At the moment when Jean Valjean turned to his left in order to reach this street he saw at the angle formed by the street and the lane a species of black and motionless statue; it was evidently a man posted there to prevent him passing. Jean Valjean fell back.

The part of Paris where Jean Valjean now was, situated between the Faubourg St. Antoine and La Rapée, was one of those which have been utterly transformed by those recent works, which some call disfigurements, others beautifying. The fields, the timber-yards, and old buildings have been removed, and there are now bran-new wide streets, arenas, circuses, hippodromes, railway stations, and a prison, Mazas—progress as we see with its corrective. Half a century back, in that popular language all made up of traditions which insists on calling the Institute "les Quatre Nations," and the Opera Comique "Fey-

deau," the precise spot where Jean Valjean now stood was called "le Petit Picpus." The Porte St. Jacques, the Porte Paris, the Barrière des Sergents, the Porcherons, the Galiothe, the Celestins, the Capucins, the Mail, the Bourbe, the tree of Cracow, little Poland, and little Picpus, are names of old Paris, swimming on the surface of the new. The memory of the people floats on the flotsam of the past. Little Picpus, which by the way scarce existed and was never more than the outline of a quarter, had almost the monastic look of a Spanish town. The streets were scarce paved, and hardly any houses lined them; excepting two or three streets, to which we are about to refer, all was wall and solitude. • There was not a shop or a vehicle, scarce a candle lighted in the windows, and every light was put out by ten o'clock. The quarter consisted of gardens, convents, timber-yards, and kitchen-grounds, and there were a few low houses with walls as lofty as themselves. Such was the quarter in the last century; the Revolution fiercely assailed it, and the Republican board of works demolished and made gaps in it: rubbish was allowed to be shot there. Thirty years ago this quarter was disappearing under the erasure of new buildings, and now it is entirely obliterated.

Little Picpus, of which no modern map retains a trace, is very clearly indicated in the plan of 1727, published at Paris by Denis Thirery, Rue St. Jacques, opposite the Rue du Plâtre; and at Lyons by Jean Girin, Rue Mercière. Little Picpus had what we have just called a Y of streets formed by the Rue du Chemin Vert St. Antoine dividing into two-branches, the left hand one taking the name of the Petite Rue Picpus, and the right hand that of Rue Polonceau. The two branches of the Y were joined at their summit by a sort of cross bar called Rue Droit-mur. Any one who, coming from the Seine, reached the end of Rue Polonceau, had on his left Rue Droit-mur, turning sharply at a right angle, in front of him the wall of that street, and on his right a truncated prolongation of the Rue Droit-mur called the Cul de sac Genrot.

It was here that Jean Valjean was; as we said, on per-

ceiving the black shadow, standing on watch at the corner of the Rue Droit-mur and the Petite Rue Picpus, he fell back, for he was doubtless watched by this phantom. What was to be done? he had no time to retrograde, for what he had seen moving in the shadow a few moments previously in his rear was of course Javert and his squad. Javert was probably already at the beginning of the street at the end of which Jean Valjean was. Javert, according to appearances, was acquainted with this labyrinth, and had taken his precautions by sending one of his men to guard the outlet. These conjectures, which so closely resembled certainty, whirled suddenly in Jean Valjean's troubled brain like a handful of dust raised by an unexpected puff of wind. He examined the blind alley, that was barred; he examined the Rue Picpus, a sentry was there, and he saw his black shadow distinctly thrown on the white moonlit pavement. To advance was falling into this man's clutches; to fall back was throwing himself into Javert's arms. Jean Valjean felt himself caught in a net which was being slowly hauled in, and looked up to heaven in despair.

---

### CHAPTER III.

#### ATTEMPTS TO ESCAPE.

IN order to understand the following the reader must form an exact idea of the Droit-mur lane, and in particular of the angle which the visitor left on his left when he turned out of the Rue Polonceau into this lane. The lane was almost entirely bordered on the right by poor-looking houses, on the left by single slim-looking edifices, composed of several *corps de logis*, which gradually rose from one floor to two as they approached Little Rue Picpus, so that this mansion, which was very lofty on that side, was very low on the side of Rue Polonceau, where, at the corner to which we have alluded, it sank so low as to be only a wall. This wall did not run parallel with the lane, but formed a very deep cant, concealed by its corners

from any observers in Rue Polonceau and Rue Droit-mur. From this cant the wall extended along Rue Polonceau up to a house bearing the No. 49, and in Rue Droit-mur, where it was much shorter, up to the frowning building to which we have referred, whose gable it intersected, thus forming a new re-entering angle in the street. This gable had a gloomy appearance, for only one window was visible, or, to speak more correctly, two shutters covered with sheet zinc and always closed. The description of the locality which we are now giving is strictly correct, and will doubtless arouse a very precise souvenir in the mind of the old inhabitants of the quarter.

The cant in the wall was entirely occupied by a thing that resembled a colossal and wretched gateway ; it was a vast collection of perpendicular planks, the top ones wider than those below, and fastened together by long cross strips of iron. By the side of this gate was a *porte cochère* of ordinary dimensions, which had apparently been made in the wall about fifty years previously. A linden tree displayed its branches above the cant, and the wall was covered with ivy on the side of the Rue Polonceau.

In Jean Valjean's desperate situation this gloomy building had an uninhabited and solitary look about it which tempted him. He hurriedly examined it, and said to himself that if he could only enter it he might perhaps be saved. In the centre of the frontage of this building, turned to the Rue Droit-mur, there were old leaden drain-pipes at all the windows of the different floors. The various branches which led to a central pipe formed a species of tree on the façade ; these ramifications with their hundred elbows imitated those old vine branches which cling to the front of old farm houses. This and a large espalier of lead and iron branches was the first thing that caught Jean Valjean's attention. He put Cosette down with her back against a post, bidding her be silent, and hurried to the spot where the main pipe reached the ground. Perhaps there might be a way to scale it and enter the house, but the pipe was worn out, and scarce held in its cramps ; besides, all the windows of this silent

## LES MISÉRABLES.

house were defended by thick iron bars, even the garrets. And then the moon shone full on this front, and the man watching at the end of the street would see Jean Valjean climb up; and then what was he to do with Cosette? how was he to hoist her up a three-storeyed house? He gave up all idea of climbing by the pipe, and crawled along the wall to re-enter Rue Polonceau. When he reached the cant where he had left Cosette he noticed that no one could see him there. As we stated, he was safe from all eyes, no matter on what side; moreover, he was in the shadow, and then, lastly, there were two gates, which might perhaps be forced. The wall over which he saw the linden tree and the ivy evidently belonged to a garden in which he could at least conceal himself, though there was no foliage on the trees, and pass the rest of the night. Time was slipping away, and he must set to work at once. He felt the *porte cochère*, and at once perceived that it was fastened up inside and out; and then went to the other great gate with more hope. It was frightfully decrepit, its very size rendered it less solid, the planks were rotten, and the iron bands, of which there were only three, were rusty. It seemed possible to break through this affair. On examining this gate, however, he saw that it was not a gate; it had no hinges, lock, or partition in the centre; the iron bands crossed it from side to side without any solution of continuity. Through the cracks of the planks he caught a glimpse of coarsely-mortared rag stone, which passers-by might have seen ten years back. He was forced to confess to himself with consternation that this fancied gate was simply a make-believe; it was easy to pull down a plank, but he would find himself face to face with a wall.

## CHAPTER IV.

A THING IMPOSSIBLE WERE THE STREETS LIT WITH GAS.

At this moment a hollow, cadenced sound began to grow audible a short distance off, and Jean Valjean ventured to

take a peep round the corner of the street. Seven or eight soldiers were entering the street ; he could see their bayonets gleaming, and they were coming toward him. These soldiers, at the head of whom he distinguished Javert's tall form, advanced slowly and cautiously, and frequently halted ; it was plain that they were exploring all the corners and all the doors and lanes. It was—and here conjecture could not be wrong—some patrol which Javert had met and requested to assist him. Judging from the pace at which they marched, and the halts they made, they would require about a quarter of an hour to reach the spot where Jean Valjean was. It was a frightful thought ; a few moments separated Jean Valjean from the awful precipice which yawned before him for the third time. And the galleys were now not merely the galleys, but Cosette lost for ever, that is to say, a life resembling the interior of a tomb.

There was only one thing possible. Jean Valjean had one peculiarity that he might be said to carry two wallets ; in one he had the thoughts of a saint, in the other the formidable talents of a convict, and he felt in one or the other as opportunity offered. Among other resources, owing to his numerous escapes from the Toulon galleys, he had become a perfect master in the incredible art of raising himself without ladder, or cramping irons, and by his mere muscular strength, and holding on by his shoulders and knees, in the right angle of a wall, to the sixth floor if necessary ; an art which rendered so terrible and so celebrated that corner of the yard in the Paris Conciergerie by which the condemned convict Battemolle escaped twenty years ago. Jean Valjean measured the height of the wall above which he saw the linden tree, and found that it was about eighteen feet. The lower part of the angle which it made with the gable end of the large building was filled up with a triangular mass of masonry, very common in Parisian corners. This mass was about five feet high, and the space to be cleared from the top of it was not more than fourteen ; but the difficulty was Cosette, for she could not climb a wall. Abandon her ? Jean Valjean



did not think of it, but carrying her was impossible ; a man requires his whole strength to carry out such an ascent, and the slightest burden would displace his centre of gravity and hurl him down. He required a rope, but he had none. Where was he to find a rope at midnight in the Rue Polonceau ? Assuredly at this moment if Jean Valjean had possessed a kingdom he would have given it for a rope. All extreme situations have their flashes, which at one moment blind, at another illumine, us. Jean Valjean's desperate glance fell on the lamp-post in the blind alley. In those days there were no gas-lights in the streets of Paris ; at nightfall lamps were lit at regular distances, which were pulled up and down by a rope that crossed the street, and fitted into a groove in a post. The end of the rope was kept in an iron box under the lantern of which the lamplighter had the key, and the rope itself was protected by a metal case. Jean Valjean leaped across the street, burst the lock of the box with the point of his knife, and a moment later was again by Cosette's side holding a rope. Such gloomy finders of expedients when struggling with fatality set rapidly to work. We have mentioned that the lamps were not lit on this night ; the one in the blind alley therefore was naturally extinguished, and any one might have passed close without noticing that it was no longer in its place.

The hour, the place, the darkness, Jean Valjean's pre-occupation, his singular gestures, his coming and going, were all beginning to alarm Cosette. Any other child would have begun crying loudly long before, but she confined herself to pulling the skirt of his coat. The noise of the approaching patrol constantly became more distinct.

"Father," she whispered, "I am frightened ; who is coming ?"

"Silence," the unhappy man replied, "it is Madame Thénardier."

The child trembled, and he added,—

"Do not say a word, but leave me to act ; if you cry out or sob she will catch you and take you back again."

Then, without hurry, but without doing anything twice over, with a firm and sharp precision, which was the more remarkable at such a moment, when the patrol and Javert might be instantly expected, he undid his cravat, fastened it under Cosette's armpits, while careful not to hurt her, fastened the rope to the cravat, took the other end in his teeth, took off his shoes and stockings, which he threw over the wall, and began raising himself in the corner of the wall with as much certainty as if he had cramping irons under his heels and elbows. Half a minute had not elapsed ere he was astride the coping. Cosette looked at him in stupor, without saying a word ; for Jean Valjean's mention of the landlady's name had frozen her. All at once she heard Jean Valjean say to her, in a very low voice,—

"Lean against the wall."

She obeyed.

"You must not say a word, or feel frightened," he continued.

And she felt herself lifted from the ground, but before she had time to look round she found herself on the top of the wall. Jean Valjean placed her on his back, took her two little hands in his left hand, and crawled along the wall till he reached the cant. As he had suspected, there was a building here, whose roof began at the top of the bastard gate and descended in a gentle slope nearly to the ground, grazing the linden tree. This was a fortunate circumstance, for the wall was much higher on this side than on that of the street, and Jean Valjean could scarce see the ground, so far was it beneath him. He had just reached the sloping roof, and had not yet loosed his hold of the coping, when a violent uproar announced the arrival of the patrol, and he heard Javert's thundering voice,—

"Search the blind alley ; all the streets are guarded, and I will wager that he is in it."

The soldiers rushed forward. Jean Valjean slipped down the roof, still supporting Cosette, reached the linden tree, and leapt on the ground. Either through

terror or courage the child had not said a word; her hands were only slightly grazed.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE BEGINNING OF AN ENIGMA.

JEAN VALJEAN found himself in a large garden of most singular appearance, one of those gloomy gardens that appear made to be looked at in winter, and by night. This garden was of an oblong shape, with a walk of tall poplars at the end, tall shrubs in the corner, and an unshadowed space, in the centre of which an isolated tree could be distinguished. There were also a few stunted fruit-trees bristling like brambles, vegetable plots, a melon bed, whose frames glistened in the moonlight, and an old well. Here and there were stone benches that seemed black with moss; the walks were bordered with small gloomy-looking and upright shrubs; grass covered one half of the walks, and a green mould the other half.

Jean Valjean had by his side the building, by help of whose roof he had descended, a pile of faggots, and behind the latter, close to the wall, a stone statue, whose mutilated face was merely a shapeless mask, appearing indistinctly in the darkness. The building was a species of ruin, containing several dismantled rooms, of which one was apparently employed as a shed. The large edifice of the Rue Droit-mur had two façades looking into this garden at right angles, and these façades were even more melancholy than those outside. All the windows were barred, and not a single light could be seen, while at the upper windows there were scuttles as in prisons. One of these frontages threw its shadow upon the other, which fell back on the garden like an immense black cloth. No other house could be noticed, and the end of the garden was lost in mist and night. Still, walls could be indistinctly noticed intersecting each other, as if there

were other gardens beyond, and the low roofs in the Rue Polonceau. Nothing more stern and solitary than this garden could well be imagined ; there was no one in it, as was natural at such an hour, but it did not look as if the spot were made for any one to walk in, even in bright daylight.

Jean Valjean's first care was to put on his shoes and stockings again, and then enter the shed with Cosette. A man who is escaping never considers himself sufficiently concealed, and the child, who was still thinking of Madame Thénardier, shared his instinct for concealment. Cosette trembled and clung close to him : for she could hear the tumultuous noise of the patrol searching the street and lane, the blows of musket-butts against the stones, Javert's appeals to the men whom he had posted, and his oaths, mingled with words which could not be distinguished. At the expiration of a quarter of an hour this species of stormy grumbling appeared to be retiring, and Jean Valjean could scarce breathe. He had gently laid his hand on Cosette's mouth. The solitude in which he found himself was so strangely calm, however, that the furious uproar so close at hand did not even cast the shadow of a trouble over it. All at once, in the midst of this profound calm, a new sound burst forth ; a heavenly, divine, ineffable sound, as ravishing as the other had been horrible. It was a hymn, that issued from the darkness, a dazzling blending of prayer and harmony in the dark and fearful silence of the night : female voices, but composed at once of the pure accent of virgins and the simple voices of children, such voices as do not belong to earth, and resemble those which the newborn still hear, and the dying begin to hear. This chant came from the gloomy building that commanded the garden, and at the moment when the noise of the demons was retiring it seemed like a choir of angels approaching in the dark. Cosette and Jean Valjean fell on their knees ; they knew not what it was, they knew not where they were, but both man and child, the penitent and the innocent, felt that they must fall on their knees. The

## LES MISÉRABLES.

voices had this strangeness about them, that they did not prevent the edifice from appearing deserted; it seemed like a supernatural chant in an uninhabited house. While the voices sang Jean Valjean thought of nothing else; he no longer saw the night, but an azure sky. He fancied that the wings which we all of us have within us were expanding in him. The singing ceased; it had probably lasted some time, but Jean Valjean could not have said how long, for hours of ecstasy never occupy more than a minute. All had become silent again: there was no sound in the garden, no sound in the street; all that had threatened, all that had reassured, had faded away. The wind shook on the coping of the wall some dry grass, which produced a soft and melancholy sound.

The night breeze had risen, which proved that it must be between one and two in the morning. Cosette said nothing, and as she was leaning her head against him, Jean Valjean fancied that she was asleep. He bent down and looked at her: her eyes were wide open, and she had a pensive look which hurt Jean Valjean. She was still trembling.

"Do you feel inclined to sleep?" he asked her.

"I am very cold," she answered; a moment after she continued,—

"Is she still there?"

"Who?" Jean Valjean asked.

"Madame Thénardier."

Jean had forgotten the way he had employed to keep Cosette silent.

"Ah," he said, "she is gone, and you have nothing to fear."

The child sighed, as if a weight had been taken off her chest.

The ground was damp, the shed open on all sides, and the wind grew more cutting every moment. He took off his coat and wrapped Cosette up in it.

"Are you less cold now?" he said.

"Oh! yes, father."

"Well, wait for me a minute."

He left the ruin, and began walking along the large building in search of some better shelter. He came to doors, but they were closed, and there were bars on all the ground-floor windows. After passing the inner angle of the edifice he noticed that he had come to some arched windows, and perceived a faint light. He raised himself on tip-toe and looked through one of the windows ; they all belonged to a large hall, paved with stones, in which nothing could be distinguished but a little light and great shadows. The light came from a night-lamp burning in the corner. This hall was deserted and nothing was stirring in it, and yet, after a long look, he fancied that he could see on the ground something that seemed to be covered with a pall and resembled a human form. It was stretched out flat, with its face against the stones, its arms forming a cross, and motionless as death. From a species of snake which dragged along the pavement, it looked as if this sinister form had the rope round its neck. The whole hall was bathed in that mist of badly-lighted places, which intensifies the horror.

Jean Valjean\* often said afterwards that, although he had witnessed many mournful sights in his life, he had never seen one more chilling or terrifying than this enigmatical figure performing some strange mystery at this gloomy spot, and thus caught sight of through the darkness. It was frightful to suppose that it might be dead, and more frightful still to think that it might possibly be still alive. He had the courage to place his face to the pane, and watch whether the figure would stir ; but though he remained for a time, which appeared to him very long, the outstretched form made no movement. All at once he felt himself assailed by an indescribable horror, and he ran off toward the shed without daring to look back ; he fancied that if he turned his head he should see the figure walking after him and waving its arms. When he reached the ruin he was panting, his knees gave way, and the perspiration was running down his back. Where was he ? who could have imagined anything like this species of sepulchre in the heart

## LES MISÉRABLES.

of Paris? What was the strange house? • An edifice full of nocturnal mystery, calling souls in the darkness, the voice of angels, and when they arrive, suddenly offering them this frightful vision; promising to open the bright gate of heaven, and, instead, opening the horrible gate of the tomb! and it was really a mansion, a house which had its number in a street. It was not a dream; but he was obliged to touch the stones in order to believe it. Cold, anxiety, apprehension, and the emotion of the night, brought on him a real fever, and all his ideas were confused in his brain. He went up to Cosette; she was asleep with her head upon a stone. He sat down by her side and began gazing at her; gradually, as he looked, he grew calm and regained possession of his freedom of mind.

He clearly perceived this truth, the basis of his future life, that, so long as she was there, so long as he had her by his side, he would require nothing except for her, nor fear anything save on her account. He did not even feel the cold particularly, for, though he had taken off his coat it was to cover her. Still, through the reverie into which he had fallen, he had heard for some time past a singular noise, like a bell being rung, and it was in the garden. It could be heard distinctly, though faintly, and resembled those cattle bells, which produce a gentle melody at night in the grazing fields. This noise made Jean Valjean turn, and he saw that there was some one in the garden. A being looking like a man was walking among the melon frames, rising, stooping, and stopping with regular movements, as if he was dragging or stretching out something on the ground. This man was apparently lame. Jean Valjean gave the continual, trembling start of the unhappy; everything is hostile and suspicious to him; they distrust the day because it allows them to be seen, and night because it helps in surprising them. Just now he shuddered because the garden was deserted, and now he shuddered because there was some one in it. He fell back from chimerical into real terror; he said to himself that Javert and the

police had probably not gone away, that they had, in any case, left watchmen in the street ; and that if this man discovered him he would give an alarm and hand him over to the police. He gently raised the still sleeping Cosette in his arms, and carried her behind a mass of old furniture in the most remote part of the shed ; Cosette did not stir. From this spot he observed the movements of the being in the melon ground ; the strange thing was that the noise of the bell followed this man's every movement. When he approached the sound approached ; when he went away the sound went away. If he made a sudden movement a little peal followed the movement, and when he stopped the noise ceased. It appeared evident that the bell was fastened to this man ; but in that case what could be the meaning of it ? Who was the man to whom a bell was fastened, as if he were a ram or an ox ? While asking himself these questions he touched Cosette's hands ; they were chilled.

" Oh, heaven ! " he said.

And he asked in a whisper, " Cosette ! " .

She did not open her eyes. He shook her sharply, but she did not awake.

" Can she be dead ? " he said to himself, and he rose shivering from head to foot.

The most frightful thoughts crossed his mind pell-mell. There are moments when hideous suppositions assail us like a band of furies, and violently force the bolts of our brain. When it is a question about people whom we love our prudence invents all sorts of follies. He remembered that sleep in the open air on a cold night might be mortal. Cosette was lying stretched out motionless at his feet. He listened for her breath ; she was breathing, but so faintly that it seemed as if the respiration would cease at any moment. How was he to warm her ? how was he to wake her ? All that did not refer to this slipped from his mind, and he rushed wildly from the shed. It was absolutely necessary that Cosette should be in bed before a fire within a quarter of an hour.



# LES MISÉRABLES

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE MAN WITH THE BELL.

JEAN VALJEAN walked straight up to the man whom he saw in the garden, and while doing so took from his pocket the rouleau of silver. This man was looking down, and did not see him coming, and in a few strides Jean Valjean was by his side, and addressed him with the cry, "One hundred francs."

The man started and raised his eyes.

"One hundred francs to be gained," Jean Valjean continued, "if you will find me a shelter for this night."

The moon fully lit up Jean Valjean's alarmed face.

"Why it is you, Father Madeleine!" the man said.

The name uttered thus in the darkness at this strange spot, by this strange man, made Jean Valjean recoil, for he expected everything save that. The man who addressed him was a stooping, lame old man, dressed nearly like a peasant, and wearing on his left leg a leathern knee-cap, from which hung a rather large bell. It was impossible to distinguish his face, which was in the shadow; still, the man had doffed his bonnet, and said all in a tremor,—

"Oh, Lord, how did you get here, Father Madeleine? which way did you come in? Why, you must have fallen from heaven. Well, if ever you do fall, it will be from there. And then, what a state you are in! you have no cravat, no hat, and no coat! Do you know that you would have frightened anybody who did not know you? No coat! Oh, my goodness, are the saints going mad at present? But how *did* you get in here?"

One word did not wait for the next, the old man spoke with a rustic volubility in which there was nothing alarming; and it was all said with a mixture of stupefaction and simple kindness.

"Who are you? and what is this house?" Jean Valjean asked.

"Oh, Lord, that is too strong," the old man exclaimed;

"why, did you not get me the situation, and in this house too? What, don't you recognize me?"

"No," said Jean Valjean, "and how is it that you know me?"

"You saved my life," the man said.

He turned, a moonbeam played on his face, and Jean Valjean recognized old Fauchelevent.

"Ah!" he said, "it is you? Oh, now I recognize you."

"That is lucky," the old man said, reproachfully.

"And what are you doing here?" Jean Valjean asked.

"Why! I am covering my melons."

Old Fauchelevent really held in his hand at the moment when Jean Valjean accosted him a piece of matting, which he was engaged in spreading over the melon frame. He had laid a good many pieces during the hour he had been in the garden, and it was this operation that produced the peculiar movements which Jean Valjean had noticed from the shed. He continued,—

"I said to myself, there is a bright moon and it is going to freeze, so I had better put these great-coats on my melons." And he added, as he looked at Jean Valjean with a grin, "You should have done the same. But how have you got here?"

Jean Valjean, feeling himself known by this man, at least under the name of Madeleine, only advanced cautiously. He multiplied his questions, and curiously enough they changed parts—he, the intruder, became the questioner.

"And what is that bell you have on your knee?"

"That?" Fauchelevent said; "it is that they may avoid me."

"What on earth do you mean?"

Old Fauchelevent gave an inimitable wink.

"Oh, Lord, they are only women in this house, and lots of girls. It seems that I should be dangerous to meet, and so the bell warns them; when I come, they go."

"What is this house?"

"Oh, nonsense, you know."

## LES MISÉRABLES.

"Indeed I do not."

"Why, you got me the gardener's place here."

"Answer me as if I knew nothing."

"Well, it is the convent of the little Picpus, then."

Jean Valjean's recollections returned to him. Chance, that is to say, Providence, had brought him to the very convent in the Quartier St. Antoine, where Fauchelevent after his accident had been engaged on his recommendation two years back. He repeated, as if speaking to himself,—

"Little Picpus !"

"But come, tell me," Fauchelevent continued, "how the ~~deuce~~ did you get in here, Father Madeleine ? for though you are a saint, you are a man, and no men are admitted here."

"Why, you are."

"Well, only I."

"And yet," Jean Valjean continued, "I must remain."

"Oh, Lord !" Fauchelevent exclaimed.

Jean Valjean walked up to the gardener and said in a grave voice,—

"Fauchelevent, I saved your life."

"I was the first to remember it," Fauchelevent answered.

"Well, you can do for me to-day what I did for you formerly."

Fauchelevent took Jean Valjean's muscular hands in his old wrinkled and trembling hands, and for some seconds seemed as if unable to speak ; at length he exclaimed,—

"Oh ! it would be a blessing from heaven, if I could repay you a little part ! Save your life ! M. Madeleine, you can dispose of an old man as you would please."

A wonderful joy had transfigured the aged gardener, and his face seemed radiant.

"What do you wish me to do ?" he continued.

"I will explain : have you a room ?"

"I have a cottage, behind the ruins of the old convent in a corner which no one visits, with three ———"

"Good," said Jean Valjean; "now I will ask two things of you."

"What are they, M. le Maire?"

"First, that you will tell nobody what you know about me; and, secondly, that you will not try to learn anything further."

"As you please. I know that you can do nothing but what is honest, and that you have ever been a man after God's heart. And then, again, it was you who got me this situation, and I am at your service."

"Enough; now come with me, and we will go and fetch the child."

"Ah," said Fauchelevent, "there is a child."

He did not add a word, but followed Jean Valjean as a dog follows its master. In less than half an hour, Cosette, who had become rosy again by the heat of a good fire, was asleep in the old gardener's bed. Jean Valjean had put on his cravat and coat again; the hat thrown over the wall had been found and picked up, and Fauchelevent took off his knee-cap and bell, which now adorned the wall by the side of a door. The two men were seated near the fire at a table on which Fauchelevent had placed a lump of cheese, biscuits, a bottle of wine and two glasses, and the old man said to Jean Valjean as he laid his hand on his knee,—

"Ah, Father Madeleine! you did not recognize me at once; you save people's lives and forget them afterwards! Oh, that is wrong, for they remember you; you are an ungrateful man."

## CHAPTER VII.

### HOW JAVERT ONLY FOUND THE NEST.

THE events of which we have just seen the back, so to speak, had occurred under the simplest conditions. When Jean Valjean, on the night of the day on which Javert arrested him by Fantine's death-bed, broke out of M—— gaol, the police supposed that the escaped convict would

proceed to Paris. Paris is a maelstrom in which everything is lost and disappears in the whirlpool of the streets ; no forest can conceal a man so well as that crowd, and fugitives of every description are aware of the fact. They go to Paris to be swallowed up, for that is at times a mode of safety. The police are aware of this too, and it is at Paris they seek what they have lost elsewhere. They sought there the ex-mayor of M——, and Javert was summoned to assist in the search, and in truth powerfully assisted in recapturing Jean Valjean. The zeal and intelligence he displayed in this office were noticed by M. Chabouillet, Secretary to the Prefecture under Count Anglès, and this gentleman, who had before been a friend to Javert, had the police inspector of M—— appointed to the Paris district. Here Javert proved himself variously, and—let us say it, though the word seems inappropriate when applied to such services—honourably useful.

He thought no more of Jean Valjean—with these dogs ever on the hunt the wolf of to-day causes the wolf of yesterday to be forgotten—until in December, 1823, he, who never read newspapers, read one. But Javert, who was a legitimist, was anxious to learn the details of the triumphal entry of the “ Prince Generalissimo ” into Bayonne. When he had finished the article that interested him a name, the name of Jean Valjean at the foot of a column, attracted him. The newspaper announced that the convict Jean Valjean was dead, and published the fact in such formal terms that Javert did not doubt it. He musing said, “ That is the best bolt,” then threw away the paper, and thought no more of the subject. Some time after, it happened that a report was sent by the Prefecture of the Seine et Oise to that of Paris about the abduction of a child, which took place, it was said, under peculiar circumstances, in the parish of Montfermeil. A little girl of seven or eight years of age, who had been entrusted by her mother to a publican in the town, had been stolen by a stranger. The child answered to the name of Cosette, and her mother was a certain Fantine, who had died in an hospital, it was not known when or where. This report

passed under Javert's eyes, and rendered him thoughtful. The name of Fantine was familiar to him ; he remembered that Jean Valjean had made him laugh by asking him for a respite of three days to go and fetch this creature's child. He remembered that Jean Valjean was arrested at Paris at the very moment when he was getting into the Montfermeil coach, and some facts had led to the supposition at the time that he had taken a trip to the vicinity of the village on the previous day, for he had not been seen in the village itself. What was his business at Montfermeil? No one was able to guess ; but Javert now understood it—Fantine's daughter was there, and Jean Valjean had gone to fetch her. Now this child had just been stolen by a stranger. Who could the stranger be ? could it be Jean Valjean ?—but he was dead. Javert, without saying a word to anybody, took the coach at the " Pewter Platter," and went off to Montfermeil.

He expected to find here a great clearing up, but only found a great obscurity. At the beginning, the Thénardiens, in their vexation, had chattered, and the disappearance of the Lark produced a sensation in the village. There were at once several versions of the story, which finally settled down into an abduction, and hence the police report. Still, after he had got over his first outburst of temper, Thénardier, with his admirable instinct, very speedily comprehended that it is never useful to set the authorities at work, and that his complaint about the abduction of Cosette would have the primary result of fixing the flashing gaze of justice upon himself, and many dark matters he was mixed up in. The thing that owls least like is to have a candle brought to them. And then again, how would he get out of the fifteen hundred francs which he had received ? He stopped short, put a gag in his wife's mouth, and affected amazement when people spoke about " the stolen child." He did not at all understand ; he had certainly complained at the first moment about his little darling being taken from him so suddenly ; he should have liked to keep her for two or three days longer through affection ; but it was her grandfather who

## LES MISÉRABLES.

had come to fetch her in the most natural way in the world. He added the "grandfather," which produced a good effect, and it was on this story that Javert fell upon reaching Montfermeil: the grandfather caused Jean Valjean to fade out of memory. Javert, however, drove a few questions like probes into Thénardier's story: "Who was this grandfather, and what was his name?" Thénardier answered simply, "He is a rich farmer; I saw his passport, and I fancy his name was M. Guillaume Lambert." Lambert is a respectable and most reassuring name, and so Javert returned to Paris. "Jean Valjean is really dead," he said to himself, "and I am an ass."

He was beginning to forget the whole affair again, when in the course of March, 1824, he heard talk of a peculiar character who lived in the parish of St. Medard, and was surnamed the "beggar who gives alms." This man was said to be an annuitant, whose name no one exactly knew, and who lived alone with a little girl of eight years of age, who knew nothing about herself, except that she came from Montfermeil. Montfermeil! that name constantly returned, and made Javert prick up his ears. An old begging spy, an ex-beadle, to whom this person was very charitable, added a few more details. "He was a very stern person; he never went out till night; he spoke to nobody, except to the poor now and then, and let no one approach him. He wore a horrible old yellow coat, which was worth several millions, as it was lined all through with bank-notes." This decidedly piqued Javert's curiosity. In order to see this annuitant closer, without startling him, he one day borrowed the beadle's rags and the place where the old spy crouched every evening, snuffing his orisons through his nose, and spying between his prayers. "The suspicious individual" really came up to Javert, thus travestied, and gave him alms. At this moment Javert raised his head, and the shock which Jean Valjean received on fancying that he recognized Javert, Javert received on fancying that he recognized Jean Valjean. Still, the darkness might have deceived him; and Jean Valjean's death was official.

Javert felt serious doubts, and when in doubt, Javert, a scrupulous man, never collared anybody. He followed his man to Nos 50-52, and made the old woman talk, which was no difficult task. She confirmed the fact of the great-coat lined with millions, and told the story about the thousand-franc note; she had seen it! she had felt it! Javert hired a room, and took possession of it that same night. He listened at the door of the mysterious lodger, in the hope of hearing his voice, but Jean Valjean saw his candle through the key-hole, and foiled the spy by holding his tongue.

On the next day Jean Valjean decamped, but the noise of the five-franc piece which he let drop was noticed by the old woman, who supposed that he was about to leave, and hastened to warn Javert. Hence, when Jean Valjean left the house at night, Javert was waiting for him behind the trees with two men. Javert had requested assistance at the Prefecture, but had not mentioned the name of the individual whom he hoped to seize. That was his secret, and he kept it for three reasons: first, because the slightest indiscretion might give Jean Valjean the alarm; secondly, because laying hands on an old escaped convict, supposed to be dead, on a condemned man, whom justice had already classified for ever among "the malefactors of the most dangerous class," was a magnificent success, which the older policemen of Paris would certainly not leave to a newcomer like Javert—and he was afraid lest he might be robbed of his galley-slave; lastly, because Javert, having artistic tastes, was fond of anything unexpected. He hated those successes which are deflowered by being talked of a long time beforehand, and he liked to elaborate his masterpieces in the darkness and suddenly unveil them. Javert followed Jean Valjean from tree to tree, and then from street corner to street corner, and had not once taken his eye off him; even at the moment when Jean Valjean fancied himself the safest, Javert's eye was upon him. Why did Javert not arrest him, though? Because he was still in doubt. It must be borne in mind that, at this period, the police were not exactly at their ease, and the free press annoyed them. A



few arbitrary arrests, denounced by the newspapers, had found an echo in the Chambers, and rendered the Prefecture timid. Attacking individual liberty was a serious matter ; the agents were afraid of being deceived, for the Prefect made them answerable, and a mistake was dismissal. Just imagine the effect which would have been produced in Paris by the following short paragraph reproduced by twenty papers—" Yesterday, an old, white-haired grandfather, a respectable fund-holder, who was taking a walk with his grand-daughter, eight years of age, was arrested and taken to the House of Detention, as an escaped convict." Let us repeat also that Javert had scruples of his own ; the warnings of his conscience were added to those of the Prefect, and he really doubted. Jean Valjean had his back turned to him, and was walking in the dark ; sorrow, anxiety, despondency, the fresh misfortune of being compelled to fly by night and seek a chance refuge for Cosette and himself in Paris, the necessity of regulating his pace by that of a child—all this had unconsciously changed Jean Valjean's demeanour, and imparted to him such a senility, that the very police, incarnated in Javert, might be deceived, and were deceived. The impossibility of approaching close, his attire as an old *émigré* tutor, Thénardier's statement which made him out a grandpapa, and, lastly, the belief in his death at the galleys, added to the uncertainty that clouded Javert's mind. For a moment he had the idea of suddenly asking for his papers ; but, if the man was not Jean Valjean, and if he were not a respectable fund-holder, he was, in all probability, some fellow deeply entangled in the meshes of Parisian crime ; some leader of a band who gave alms to hide his other talents, and who had his " pals," his accomplices, and his lurking-places, where he could conceal himself. All the turnings this man made in the streets seemed to indicate that all was not quite right with him, and arresting him too quickly would be " killing the goose with the golden eggs." Where was the harm of waiting ? Javert felt quite certain that he could not escape. He walked along, therefore, in great perplexity, asking

himself a hundred questions about this enigmatical personage. It was not till some time after that he decidedly recognized Jean Valjean in the Rue Pontoise, by the brilliant light that poured from a wine shop.

There are only two beings in the world that quiver profoundly—the mother who recovers her child, and the tiger that finds its prey again, but Javert suffered the same quiver. So soon as he had positively recognized Jean Valjean, the formidable convict, he noticed that he had only two companions, and asked for support at the police office in the Rue Pontoise. Before catching hold of a thorn bush, people put on gloves. This delay and the halt at the Rollin Square to arrange with his agents, all but made him lose the trail, but he quickly guessed that Jean Valjean wished to place the river between himself and his hunters. He hung his head and reflected, like a bloodhound putting its nose to the ground to lift the scent, and then, with the powerful correctness of his instinct, walked to the Austerlitz bridge. One remark of the toll collector's put him on his track. "Have you seen a man with a little girl?" "I made him pay two sous," the collector answered. Javert reached the bridge just in time to see Jean Valjean leading Cosette across the moonlit square; he saw him enter the Rue du Chemin Vert St. Antoine; he thought of the blind alley arranged there like a trap, and the sole issue from it by the little Rue Picpus; and in order to stop the earth, as sportsmen say, he sent off a policeman by a detour to guard the issue. A patrol which was returning to the arsenal, happening to pass, he requested its assistance, for in such games as this soldiers are trumps, and, moreover, it is a principle that, in forcing a boar from its lair, the hunter must be scientific, and there must be a strong pack of hounds. These arrangements made, Javert, feeling that Jean Valjean was caught between the blind alley on the right, his own agent on the left, and himself behind, took a pinch of snuff. Then he began playing and enjoying a delicious and infernal moment; he let his man go before him, knowing that he held him, but desiring to defer as long as possible

the moment of arresting him ; delighted at feeling him caught, and at seeing him free, and watching him with the pleasure of the spider that lets the fly flutter for a while, and the cat that lets the mouse run. The claw and the talon have a monstrous sensuality in the fluttering movements in the animal imprisoned in their prisons ; what a delight such a strangling must be ! Javert was playing ; the meshes of his net were so solidly made, he was certain of success, and now he only needed to close his hand. Accompanied as he was, the idea of resistance was impossible, however energetic, vigorous, and desperate Jean Valjean might be.

Javert advanced slowly, examining and searching as he passed every corner of the street, like the pockets of a thief ; but when he reached the centre of the web he did not find his fly. We can imagine his exasperation. He questioned his watchmen, but they quietly declared that they had not seen the man pass. It happens at times that a stag will escape with the pack at its heels, and in such cases the oldest huntsmen know not what to say. In a disappointment of this nature Artonge exclaimed, " It is not a stag, but a sorcerer." Javert would have gladly uttered the same cry, for his disappointment was midway between despair and fury.

It is certain that errors were committed by Napoleon in the Russian war, by Alexander in the Indian war, by Cæsar in his African war, by Cyrus in the Scythian war—and by Javert in his campaign against Jean Valjean. He was probably wrong in hesitating to recognize the ex-galley slave, for a glance ought to have been sufficient for him. He was wrong in not apprehending him purely and simply at No. 50-52. He was wrong in not arresting him upon recognition, in the Rue Pontoise. He was wrong to arrange with his colleagues in the bright moonlight, although certainly advice is useful, and it is as well to interrogate those dogs which deserve credence. But the hunter cannot take too many precautions when he is following restless animals, like the wolf and the convict, and Javert by displaying too much anxiety in setting the blood-

hounds on the track, alarmed his game and started it off. After all, he was wrong, on finding the trail again at the Austerlitz bridge, in playing the dangerous and foolish trick of holding such a man by a string. He fancied himself stronger than he really was, and that he could play with the lion as if it were a mouse. At the same time he imagined himself too weak when he fancied that he must procure help; it was a fatal precaution, and the loss of precious time. Javert committed all these faults, but for all that was not the less one of the cleverest and most certain spies that ever existed. He was, in the full acceptance of the term, a dog that runs cunning; but where is the man who is perfect? Great strategicians have their eclipses, and great follies are often made, like stout ropes, of a multitude of fibres. Take the cable thread by thread, catch hold of all the small determining motives separately, and you break them one after the other, and say to yourself, "It is only that;" but twist them together and you have an enormity. It is Attila hesitating between Marcius in the East and Valentinianus in the West; it is Hannibal delaying at Capua; it is Danton falling asleep at Arcis-sur-Aube.

However this may be, even at the moment when Javert perceived that Jean Valjean had slipped from his clutches he did not lose his head. Certain that the convict could not be very far off, he established watches, organized mousetraps and ambuscades, and beat up the quarter the whole night through. The first thing he saw was the cut cord of the lanthorn. This was a valuable sign, which, however, led him astray so far that it made him turn all his attention to the Genrot blind alley. There are in this alley low walls, surrounding gardens which skirt open fields, and Jean Valjean had evidently fled in that direction. The truth is, that if he had gone a little further down the blind alley he would, in all probability, have done so, and been a lost man. Javert explored the gardens and fields as if looking for a needle, and at daybreak he left two intelligent men on duty, and returned to the Prefecture of Police, looking as hang-dog as a spy captured by a robber.

## BOOK VI.

### CHAPTER I.

#### NO. 62 RUE PICPUS.

HALF a century ago nothing more resembled any ordinary *porte cochère* than that of No. 62 Petite Rue Picpus. This door, generally half open in the most inviting manner, allowed you to see two things which are not of a very mournful nature—a courtyard with walls covered with vines, and the face of a lounging porter. Above the bottom wall tall trees could be seen, and when a sunbeam enlivened the yard, and a glass of wine enlivened the porter, it was difficult to pass before No. 62 and not carry away a laughing idea. And yet you had had a glimpse of a very gloomy place. The threshold smiled, but the house prayed and wept. If you succeeded, which was not easy, in passing the porter—as was, indeed, impossible for nearly all, for there was an “Open Sesame,” which it was necessary to know—you entered on the right a small hall from which ran a staircase enclosed between two walls, and so narrow that only one person could go up at a time; if you were not frightened by the canary-coloured plaster and chocolate wainscot of this staircase, and still boldly ascended, you crossed two landings, and found yourself in a passage on the first floor, where the yellow distemper and chocolate skirting board followed you with a quiet pertinacity. The staircase and passage were lighted by two fine windows, but the latter soon made a bend and became dark. When you had doubled this cape, you found yourself before a door, which was the more mysterious because it was not closed. You pushed it open,

and found yourself in a small room about six feet square, well scrubbed, clean, and frigid, and hung with a yellow-green sprigged paper, at fifteen sous the piece. A white pale light came through a large window with small panes, which was on the left, and occupied the whole width of the room ; you looked about you, but saw nobody ; you listened, but heard neither a footstep nor a human sound ; the walls were bare, and the room unfurnished—there was not even a chair.

You looked again, and saw in the wall facing the door a square hole, covered with a black knotty substantial cross-barred grating, which formed diamonds—I had almost written meshes—at least an inch and a half across. The little green sprigs on the yellow paper came right up to these bars, calmly and orderly, and the funereal contact did not make them start or wither. Even supposing that any human being had been so wondrously thin as to attempt to go in or out by the square hole, the bars would have prevented him ; but, though they did not let the body pass, the eyes, that is to say, the mind, could. It seemed as if this had been thought of, for it had been lined with a tin plate, in which were bored thousands of holes more microscopic than those of a strainer. Beneath this plate was an opening exactly like the mouth of a letter-box, and a bell-wire hung by the side of this hole. If you pulled this wire, a bell tinkled, and you heard a voice close to you which made you start.

“ Who is there ? ” the voice asked.

It was a female voice, a gentle voice, so gentle that it was melancholy. Here, again, there was a magic word which it was necessary to know ; if you did not know it, the voice ceased, and the wall became silent again, as if the terrifying darkness of the tomb were on the other side. If you knew the word, the voice continued, “ Turn to the right.” You then noticed, facing the window, a door, the upper part of which was of grey painted glass. You raised the latch, walked in, and experienced precisely the same expression as when you enter a box at the theatre, before the gilt grating has been lowered and the chande-

lier lighted. You were in fact in a species of box, scarce lighted by the faint light that came through the glass door, narrow, furnished with two old chairs and a ragged sofa—a real box with a black entablature to represent the front. This box had a grating, but it was not made of gilt wood as at the opera, but was a monstrous trellis-work of frightfully interlaced iron bars, fastened to the wall by enormous clamps that resembled clenched fists. When the few first moments were past, and your eye began to grow accustomed to this cellar-like gloom, you tried to look through the grating, but could not see more than six inches beyond it; there it met a barrier of black shutters, connected and strengthened by cross-beams, and painted of a gingerbread yellow. These shutters were jointed, divided into long thin planks, and covered the whole width of the grating; they were always closed. At the expiration of a few minutes, you heard a voice calling to you from behind the shutters, and saying to you,—

“I am here, what do you want with me?”

It was a loved voice, sometimes an adored voice, but you saw nobody, and could scarce hear the sound of breathing. It seemed as if it were an evocation addressing you through the wall of the tomb. If you fulfilled certain required and very rare conditions, the narrow plank of one of the shutters opened opposite to you, and the evocation became an apparition. Behind the grating, behind the shutter, you perceived, as far as the grating would allow, a head, of which you only saw the mouth and chin, for the rest was covered by a black veil. You caught a glimpse of a black wimple and of a scarce distinct form, covered by a black pall. This head spoke to you, but did not look at you, and never smiled. The light that came from behind you was so arranged that you saw her in brightness and she saw you in darkness; this light was a symbol. Still your eyes plunged eagerly through the opening into this place, closed against all looks—a profound vacuum surrounded this form clothed in mourning. Your eyes investigated this vacuum and tried to distinguish what there was around the appari-

tion, but in a very little time you perceived that you could see nothing. What you saw was night, emptiness, gloom, a winter fog mingled with the vapour from a tomb; a sort of terrifying peace; a silence in which nothing could be heard, not even sighs; a shadow in which nothing could be distinguished, not even phantoms. What you saw was the interior of a nunnery, the interior of that gloomy and stern house, which was called the convent of the Perpetual Adoration. The box in which you found yourself was the parlour, and the first voice that addressed you was that of a lay sister, who always sat, silent and motionless, on the other side of the wall, near the square opening which was defended by the iron grating and the tin plate with the thousand holes like a double visor.

The obscurity in which the grated box was plunged, resulted from the fact that the parlour, which had a window on the side of the world, had none on the side of the convent; profane eyes must not see any portion of this sacred spot. Still there was something beyond the shadow; there was a light and life amid this death. Although this convent was the most strictly immured of all, we will try to enter it and take the reader in with us, and describe, with due regard to decorum, things which novelists have never seen, and consequently never recorded.

---

## CHAPTER II.

### THE OBEDIENCE OF MARTIN VERGA.

THIS convent, which had existed for many years prior to 1824, in the Rue Picpus, was a community of Bernardines of the Obedience of Martin Verga. These Bernardines, consequently, were not attached to Clairvaux, like the Bernardine brothers, but to Citeaux, like the Benedictines. In other words, they were subjects, not of St. Bernard, but of St. Benedict.

Next to the rule of the Carmelites, who walk bare



## LES MISÉRABLES.

foot, wear a piece of wicker-work on their throat, and never sit down, the hardest rule is that of the Bernardo-Benedictines of Martin Verga. They are dressed in black with a wimple, which, by the express order of St. Benedict, comes up to the chin; a serge gown with wide sleeves, a large woollen veil, the wimple cut square on the chest, and the coif, which comes down to their eyes—such is their dress. All is black excepting the coif, which is white. Novices wear the same garb, but all white, while the professed nuns also wear a rosary by their side.

The Bernardo-Benedictines of this Obedience abstain from meat the whole year; fast all Lent, and on many other days, special to themselves; get up in their first sleep, from one to three a.m., in order to read their breviary and chant matins; sleep in serge sheets at all seasons, and on straw; never bathe or light fires; chastise themselves every Friday; observe the rule of silence; only speak during recreation, which is very short, and wear coarse flannel chemises for six months, from September 14, which is the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, up to Easter. These six months are a moderation—the rule says all the year, but the flannel chemise, insupportable in the heat of summer, produced fevers and nervous spasms. Even with this relief, when the nuns put on the flannel chemise on September 14, they suffer from fever for three or four days. Obedience, poverty, chastity, perseverance—such are their vows, which are greatly aggravated by the rule. The prioress is elected for three years by mothers, called “*Mères Vocales*,” because they have a voice in the Chapter. She can only be re-elected twice, which fixes the longest possible reign of a prioress at nine years. They never see the officiating priest, who is hidden from them by a green-baize curtain nine feet high. At the sermon, when the preacher is in the chapel, they draw the veil over their face; they must always speak low, and walk with their eyes fixed on the ground. Only one man is allowed to enter the convent, and he is the Diocesan Archbishop. There is certainly another, who is the gardener; but he

is always an aged man, and in order that he may be constantly alone in the garden, and that the nuns may avoid him, a bell is fastened to his knee.

The prioress and mothers nearly all have names imprinted with peculiar gravity, recalling, not saints and martyrs, but the incidents in the life of the Saviour—such as Mother Nativity, Mother Conception, Mother Presentation, and Mother Passion; still the names of saints are not interdicted. When you see them, you never see more of them than their mouth; and they all have yellow teeth, for a tooth-brush never entered the convent. Cleaning the teeth is the first rung of the ladder, at the foot of which is “losing the soul.” They do not call anything “mine;” they have nothing of their own, and must not be attached to anything. They say of everything “ours”—thus, our veil, our beads; if they were to allude to their chemise they would say “our chemise.” Sometimes they grow attached to some trifling object, a book of hours, a relic, or consecrated medal, but so soon as they perceive that they are beginning to grow fond of it, they are obliged to give it away. They remember the remark of St. Theresa, to whom a great lady said, at the moment of entering her order, “Allow me, Holy Mother, to send for a Bible to which I am greatly attached.” “Ah, you are still attached to something! in that case do not come among us.” No one must lock herself in under any pretence, or have a room of her own, and they live with open doors. When they pass each other, one says, “The most Holy Sacrament of the Altar be blessed and adored,” and the other answers, “For ever.” There is the same ceremony when one sister raps at another sister’s door; the door has scarce been touched ere a gentle voice is heard saying hurriedly from within, “For ever.” Like all practices, this one becomes mechanical through habit, and a sister will sometimes say “For ever,” before the other has had time to utter the long sentence, “The Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar be blessed and adored!” Among the Visitandines, the one who enters says “*Ave Maria*,” to

which the other replies, "*Gratia plena;*" this is their greeting, which is truly full of grace. At each hour of the day, three supplementary strokes are struck on the chapel bell, and at this signal, prioress, vocal mothers, professed nuns, lay sisters, novices, and postulants, break off what they are saying, doing, or thinking, and all repeat together—if it be five o'clock, for instance—"At five o'clock, and at every hour, may the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar be blessed and adored," and so on, according to the hour. This custom, which is intended to break off thoughts, and ever lead them back to God, exists in many communities, the form alone varying. Thus, at the Infant Jesus, they say, "At the present hour, and at every hour, may the love of Jesus inflame my heart!"

The Bernardo-Benedictines of Martin Verga sing the offices to a grave, full chant, and always in a loud voice, during the whole of the service. Whenever there is an asterisk in the missal, they pause, and say in a low voice, "Jesus, Marie, Joseph." In the service of the dead they employ such a deep note, that female voices can scarce descend to it, and there results from it a striking and tragical effect. The sister of Little Picpus had a vault under their high altar for the burial of their community, but the Government, as they call it, would not allow coffins to be placed in this vault, and they therefore left the convent when they were dead; this afflicted and consternated them like a violation. They had obtained the slight consolation of being buried at a special hour and in a special corner of the old Vaugirard cemetery, which was established in a field that had once belonged to the community.

When a nun is summoned to the parlour, even if she be the prioress, she pulls down her veil in such a way as only to show her mouth. The prioress alone can communicate with strangers; the others can only see their nearest relations, and that very rarely. If by chance a person from the outer world requests to see a nun whom she had formerly known or loved, a lengthened negotia-

tion is required. If it be a woman, the permission may possibly be granted. The nun comes and is spoken to through the shutters, which are only opened for a mother or a sister. We need hardly say that permission is never granted to men.

Such is the rule of St. Benedict, aggravated by Martin Verga. These nuns are not gay, rosy, and fresh, as we find sometimes in other orders; they are pale and serious and between 1825 and 1830 three of them went mad.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE BOARDING SCHOOL.

ANY one desirous of joining the community of Martin Verga must be at least two years a postulant, sometimes four, and four years a novice. It is rare for the final vows to be taken before the age of twenty-three or twenty-four years. The Bernardo-Benedictines of Martin Verga admit no widows into their order. In their cells they undergo many strange macerations, of which they are not allowed to speak. On the day when a novice professes, she is dressed in her best clothes, wears a wreath of white roses, has her hair curled, and then prostrates herself: a large black veil is spread over her, and the service for the dead is performed. Then the nuns divide into two files, one of which passes her, saying in a plaintive voice, "Our sister is dead," and the other answers triumphantly, "Living in Jesus Christ."

At the period when this story is laid, there was a boarding school attached to the convent, the pupils being young ladies of noble birth, and generally rich. Among them could be noticed Mles. de Ste. Aulaire and de Bélisseu, and an English girl, bearing the illustrious Catholic name of Talbot. These young ladies, educated by the nuns between four walls, grew up with a horror of the world, and of the century; one of them said to us one day, "Seeing the street pavement made me

shudder from head to foot." They were dressed in blue with a white cap, and a plated or gilt Holy Ghost on the chest. On certain high festivals, especially Saint Martha, they were allowed as a high favour and supreme happiness, to dress themselves like nuns, and perform the offices and practices of St. Benedict for the whole day. At first the nuns lent them their black robes, but this was deemed a profanity, and the prioress forbade it, so the novices alone were permitted to make such loans. It is remarkable that these representations, doubtless tolerated in the convent through a secret spirit of proselytism, and in order to give their children some foretaste of the sacred dress, were a real happiness and true recreation for the boarders; they were amused by them, for "it was a novelty and changed them"—candid reasons of children, which do not succeed, however, in making us worldly-minded people understand the felicity of holding a holy-water brush in one's hand, and standing for hours before a lectern and singing quartettes. The pupils conformed to all the practices of the convent, though not to all the austerities. We know a young lady who, after returning to the world and being married for some years, could not break herself of hastily saying, each time that there was a rap at the door, "For ever!" like the nuns. The boarders only saw their parents in the parlour—their mothers themselves were not even allowed to kiss them. To show how far this severity was carried, a young lady was visited one day by her mother, accompanied by a little sister three years of age. The young lady cried, because she would have liked to kiss her sister, but it was impossible. She implored at least permission for the child to pass her hand through the bars, so that she might kiss it, but it was refused almost as a scandal.

For all this, though, the young ladies filled this grave house with delightful reminiscences. At certain hours childhood sparkled in this cloister. The bell for recreation was rung, the gate creaked on its hinges, and the birds whispered to each other, "Here are the children." An irruption of youth inundated this garden, which with

its cross walks resembled a pall. Radiant faces, white foreheads, ingenuous eyes, full of gay light—all sorts of dawn—spread through the gloom. After the psalm-singing, the bell-ringing, and the services, the noise of girls, softer than the buzzing of bees, suddenly burst out. The hive of joy opened, and each brought her honey; they played, they called each other, they formed groups, and ran about; pretty little white teeth chattered at corners; in the distance veils watched the laughter, shadows guarded the beams—but what matter? they were radiant, and laughed. These four mournful walls had their moment of bedazzlement; vaguely whitened by the reflection of so much joy, they watched this gentle buzzing of the swarm. It was like a shower of roses falling on this mourning. The girls sported beneath the eye of the nuns, for the glance of impeccability does not disturb innocence; and, thanks to these children, there was a simple hour among so many austere hours. The little girls jumped about and the elder danced, and nothing could be so ravishing and august as all the fresh, innocent expansion of these childish souls. Homer might have come here to laugh with Perrault, and there were in this black garden, youth, health, noise, cries, pleasure, and happiness enough to un wrinkle the brows of all the ancestry, both of the epic poem and the fairy tale, of the throne and the cottage, from Hecuba down to La Mère Grand.

It was here that the following sweet and affecting remark was made by a foundling child, whom the convent brought up through charity. She heard the others speaking of their mothers, and she murmured in her corner, "My mother was not there when I was born." There was a fat portress who could continually be seen hurrying along the passage, with her bunch of keys, and whose name was Sister Agatha. The grown-up girls—those above ten years of age—called her Agathoclès (Agathe aux clefs). The refectory, a large, rectangular room, which only received light through an arched window, looking on the garden, was gloomy and damp,

## LES MISÉRABLES.

and, as children say, full of animals. All the surrounding places furnished their contingent of insects; and each of the four corners had received a private and expressive name, in the language of the boarders. There were Spider corner, Caterpillar corner, Woodlouse corner, and Cricket corner; the latter was near the kitchen, and highly esteemed, for it was warmer there. The names had passed from the refectory to the schoolroom, and served to distinguish four nations, as in the old Mazarin College. Every boarder belonged to one or other of these nations, according to the corner of the refectory in which they sat at meals. One day the Archbishop, while paying a pastoral visit, noticed a charming little rosy-faced girl, with glorious light hair, pass, and he asked another boarder, a pretty brunette with pink cheeks, who was near him,—

“Who is that?”

“She is a spider, sir.”

“Nonsense; and this other?”

“Is a cricket.”

“And this one?”

“A caterpillar.”

“Indeed! and what may you be?”

“I am a woodlouse, Monseigneur.”

Each house of this nature has its peculiarities: at the beginning of this century, Ecouen was one of those places in which the childhood of children is passed in an almost august gloom. At Ecouen a distinction was made between the virgins and flower-girls, in taking rank in the procession of the Holy Sacrament. There were also the “canopies” and the “censers,” the former holding the cords of the canopy, the latter swinging the censers in front of the Holy Sacrament, while four virgins walked in front. On the morning of the great day, it was not rare to have people say in the dormitory, “Who is a virgin?” Madame Campan mentions a remark made by a little girl of seven to a grown-up girl of sixteen, who walked at the head of the procession, while she, the little one, remained behind: “You are a virgin, you, but I am not one.”

## CHAPTER IV.

## AMUSEMENTS.

ABOVE the refectory door was painted in large black letters the following prayer, which was called the "White Paternoster," and which had the virtue of leading persons straight to Paradise.

"Little white Paternoster, which GOD made, which GOD said, which GOD placed in Paradise. At night, when I went to bed, I finded (*sic*) three angels at my bed—one at the foot, two at the head, and the good Virgin Mary in the middle—who told me to go to bed and fear nothing. The Lord GOD is my father, the good Virgin is my mother, the three apostles are my brothers, the three virgins are my sisters. My body is wrapped up in the shirt in which GOD was born: the cross of St. Marguerite is written on my chest. Madame the Virgin weeping for the Lord went into the fields and met there M. St. John. 'Monsieur St. John, where do you come from?' 'I have come from the *Ave Salus*.' 'You have not seen the Lord, have you?' 'He is on the tree of the cross with hanging feet, nailed-up hands, and a little hat of white-thorn on His head.' Whosoever repeats this, thrice at night and thrice in the morning, will gain Paradise in the end."

In 1827, this characteristic orison had disappeared beneath a triple coat of whitewash, and at the present day it is almost effaced from the memory of those who were young girls then, and old women now.

A large crucifix fastened to the wall completed the decoration of this refectory; whose only door opened on the garden. Two narrow tables, with wooden benches on each side, formed two long parallel lines from one end to the other of the refectory. The walls were white, the tables black; for these two mourning colours are the sole variations in convents. The meals were poor, and the food of even the children scanty; a single plate of



meat and vegetables or salt-fish was the height of luxury. This ordinary, reserved for the boarders alone, was, however, an exception. The children ate, and held their tongues, under the guardianship of the mother of the week, who, from time to time, if a fly dared to move or buzz contrary to regulation, noisily opened and closed a wooden book. This silence was seasoned with the Lives of the Saints, read aloud from a little desk standing at the foot of the crucifix, the reader being a grown-up pupil, appointed for the week. At regular distances on the bare table there were earthenware bowls, in which the pupils themselves washed their cups and forks and spoons, and sometimes threw in a piece of hard meat or spoiled fish, but this was severely punished. Any child who broke the silence made a cross with her tongue. Where? On the ground: she licked the stones. Dust, that finale of all joys, was ordered to chastise these poor little roseleaves that were guilty of prattling.

They played in a garden walk, bordered by a few stunted fruit trees. In spite of the extreme watch and the severity of the punishment, when the wind shook the trees they at times succeeded in picking up furtively a green apple, or a spoiled apricot, or a wasp-inhabited pear. This was one of their liveliest pleasures. On one occasion, at a period when the archbishop was paying a visit at the convent, one of the young ladies, Mademoiselle Bouchard, who was related to the Montmorencys, laid a wager that she would ask him for a holiday—an enormity in such an austere community. The wager was taken, but not one of those who took it believed in it. When the moment arrived for the archbishop to pass before the boarders, Mlle. Bouchard, to the indescribable horror of her companions, stepped out of the ranks and said, "Monseigneur, a holiday." Mademoiselle Bouchard was fresh and tall, and had the prettiest pink-and-white face in the world. M. de Quélen smiled, and said, "What, my dear child, a day's holiday! three, if you like: I grant three days." The prioress could do nothing, as the archbishop had said it. It was a scandal for the

convent, but a joy for the boarding school. Just imagine the effect.

Two very strict Duchesses, Mesdames de Choiseul and de Serent, frequently visited the community, doubtless by virtue of their privilege as *Magnates Mulieres*, and terribly frightened the boarders. When the two old ladies passed, all the poor girls trembled and let their eyes fall. M. de Rohan was, besides, unwittingly the object of attention among the boarders. He had just been appointed, while waiting for a bishopric, Grand Vicar of the Archbishop of Paris, and it was one of his habits to serve mass in the chapel of the Little Picpus convent. Not one of the young recluses could see him, on account of the baize curtain, but he had a soft and rather shrill voice, which they had managed to recognize and distinguish. He had been a Mousquetaire, and, besides, he was said to be somewhat of a dandy, with fine chestnut hair curled round his head, and that he wore a wide scarf of magnificent moire, and his black cassock was cut in the most elegant style. He greatly occupied all their youthful imaginations. No external sound penetrated the convent, and yet one year the sound of a flute reached it. It was an event, and the boarders of that day still remember it. It was a flute which some one was playing in the neighbourhood: it was the same tune, one now very aged, "*Ma Zétulbé, viens regner sur mon âme,*" and it was heard two or three times a day. The girls spent hours in listening, the vocal mothers were upset, brains were at work, and punishments were constant. This lasted several months; the boarders were more or less enamoured of the unknown musician, and each fancied herself Zétulbé. The sound of the flute came from the direction of the Rue Droit-mur. They would have given anything, compromised anything, attempted anything, in order to see, if only for a moment, the young man who played the flute so exquisitely, and at the same time played on all their minds. Some of them slipped out through a back door, and ascended to the third story looking out

of the street, in order to try and see him through the grating, but it was impossible ; one went so far as to pass her arm between the bars and wave her white handkerchief. Two others were even bolder : they managed to climb on to the roof, and at length succeeded in seeing the "young man." It was an old *émigré* gentleman, blind and ruined, who played the flute in his garret to while away time.

## CHAPTER V.

### , A FEW PROFILES FROM THE SHADOW.

DURING the six years between 1819 and 1825 the prioress of Little Picpus was Mademoiselle de Blêmeur, called in religion Mother Innocent. She belonged to the family of that Marguerite de Blêmeur who was authoress of the "Lives of the Saints of the Order of St. Benedict." She was a lady of about sixty years, short, stout, and with a voice like a cracked pot ; but she was an excellent creature, the only merry soul in the convent, and on that account adored. She followed in the footsteps of her ancestress Marguerite, the Dacier of the order ; she was lettered, learned, competent, versed in the curiosities of history, stuffed with Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and more a monk than a nun. The sub-prioress was an old Spanish nun, almost blind, Mother Cineres.

Mother Ste. Mechtilde, who had charge of the singing arrangements, was glad to make use of the boarders for this purpose ; she generally selected a complete musical scale, that is to say, seven assorted voices, from ten to sixteen years inclusive, whom she drew up in a line, ranging from the shortest to the tallest. In this way she produced a species of living Pandean pipes, composed of angels. The lay sisters whom the boarders liked most were Sister Ste. Euphrasie, Sister Ste. Marguerite, Sister Ste. Marthe, who was childish, and Sister

Ste. Michel, at whose long nose they laughed. All these nuns were kind to the children, and only stern to themselves; there were no fires lit except in the school-house, and the food there was luxurious when compared with that of the convent. The only thing was that when a child passed a nun and spoke to her, the latter did not answer. This rule of silence produced the result that in the whole convent language was withdrawn from human creatures and given to inanimate objects. At one moment it was the church bell that spoke, at another the gardener's; and a very sonorous gong, placed by the side of the sister porter, and which could be heard all through the house, indicated by various raps, which were a sort of acoustic telegraphy, all the actions of natural life which had to be accomplished, and summoned a nun, if required, to the parlour. Each person and each thing had its raps: the prioress had one and one; the sub-prioress one and two; six-five announced school hour, so that the pupils talked of going to six-five; four-four was Madame Genlis's signal, and as it was heard very often uncharitable persons said she was the "diable à quatre." Nineteen strokes announced a great event—it was the opening of the cloister door, a terrible iron plate all bristling with bolts, which only turned on its hinges before the archbishop. With the exception of that dignitary and the gardener, no other man entered the convent, but the boarders saw two others—one was the chaplain, Abbé Banès, an old, ugly man, whom they were allowed to contemplate through a grating; while the other was M. Ansiaux, the drawing-master, whom a letter which we have seen calls "M. Anciot," and describes as an odious old hunchback. So we see that all the men were picked.

Such was this curious house.

## BOOK VII.

### CHAPTER I.

#### HOW TO GET INTO A CONVENT.

IT was into this house that Jean Valjean had fallen from heaven, as Fauchelevent said. He had climbed the garden-wall which formed the angle of the Rue Polonceau ; the hymn of angels which he heard in the middle of the night was the nuns chanting matins ; the hall which he had caught a glimpse of in the darkness was the chapel ; the phantom he had seen stretched out on the ground was the sister performing the reparation ; and the bell which had so strangely surprised him was the gardener's bell fastened to Fauchelevent's knee. So soon as Cosette was in bed Jean Valjean and Fauchelevent supped on a glass of wine and a lump of cheese before a good, blazing log ; then, as the only bed in the cottage was occupied by Cosette, each threw himself on a truss of straw. Before closing his eyes Jean Valjean said, "I must stop here henceforth," and this remark trotted about Fauchelevent's head all night. In fact, neither of them slept ; Jean Valjean, feeling himself discovered and Javert on his track, understood that he and Cosette were lost if they entered Paris. Since the new blast of wind had blown him into this convent Jean Valjean had but one thought, that of remaining in it. Now, for a wretch in his position, this convent

was at once the most dangerous and the safest place—the most dangerous, because, as no man was allowed to enter it, if he were discovered it would be a crime, and Jean Valjean would only take one step from the convent to the prison; the safest, because if he succeeded in remaining in it, who would come to seek him there? Inhabiting an impossible spot was salvation.

On his side, Fauchelevent racked his brains. He began by declaring to himself that he understood nothing. How was M. Madeleine, in spite of all the surrounding walls, here?—and convent walls cannot be passed at a stride. How was he here with a child? People do not scale a perpendicular wall with a child in their arms. Who was this child? Where did they both come from? Since Fauchelevent had been in the convent he had received no news from M——, and did not know what had occurred there. Father Madeleine had that look which discourages questioning, and moreover Fauchelevent said to himself, “A saint is not to be cross-questioned.” It was only from a few words which escaped Jean Valjean, that the gardener fancied he could come to the conclusion that M. Madeleine had probably been made bankrupt by the hard times, and was pursued by his creditors; or else, he was compromised in a political affair and was in hiding, which idea did not displease Fauchelevent, because, like most of the peasants in the north of France, he was a staunch Bonapartist. M. Madeleine had chosen the convent as his asylum, and it was simple that he should wish to remain there. But the inexplicable thing, to which Fauchelevent constantly recurred and which addled his brains, was that M. Madeleine was here, and here with this child. Fauchelevent saw them, touched them, spoke to them, and did not believe it. The gardener was stumbling among conjectures, and saw nothing clear but this—“M. Madeleine saved my life.” This sole certainty was sufficient, and decided him; he said to himself, “It is my turn now.” He added in his conscience, “M. Madeleine did not deliberate long when he had to get under the cart to save

me," and he decided upon saving M. Madeleine. He, however, asked himself several questions, to which he gave divers answers. "After what he did for me, should I save him, if he were a robber? all the same. If he were an assassin, would I save him? all the same. Since he is a saint, shall I save him? all the same."

What a problem it was, though, to enable him to remain in the convent! Still, Fauchelevent did not recoil before this almost chimerical attempt; this poor Picard peasant, who had no other ladder but his devotion, his good-will, and a small stock of old rustic craft, this time turned to a generous purpose, undertook to scale the impossibilities of the convent, and the rough escarpments of the rule of St. Benedict. Fauchelevent was an old man, who had been during life selfish, and who, at the end of his days, limping, infirm, and taking no interest in the world, found it pleasant to be grateful, and seeing a virtuous action to be done, he flung himself upon it like a man who, on the point of death, lays his hand on a glass of good wine which he had never tasted, and eagerly drinks it off. We may add that the air which he had been breathing for some years in this convent had destroyed his personality, and had eventually rendered some good deed a necessity for him. He therefore formed the resolution of devoting himself for M. Madeleine. We have just called him a "poor Picard peasant;" the qualification is correct but incomplete. At the present stage of our story a little physiological examination of Father Fauchelevent becomes useful. He was a peasant, but he had been a notary, which added chicanery to his cunning and penetration to his simplicity. Having, through various reasons, failed in his business, he descended from a notary to be a carter and day-labourer; but in spite of the oaths and lashes necessary for horses, as it seems, something of the notary had clung to him. He had some natural wit; he did not say "I are" or "I has;" he could converse, which was a rare thing in a village, and the other peasants used to say of him, "He talks exactly like a gentleman in a

hat." Fauchelevent, in fact, belonged to that species which the impertinent and light vocabulary of the last century qualified as "a bit of a rustic and a bit of a townsman, pepper and salt." Fauchelevent, though sorely tried, and much worn by fate, a sort of poor old threadbare soul, was still a man to act on the first impulse, and spontaneously; a precious quality which prevents a man from ever being wicked. His defects and vices, for he had such, were on the surface, and altogether his physiognomy was one of those which please the observer. His old face had none of those ugly wrinkles on the top of the forehead which signify wickedness or stupidity. At daybreak, after thinking enormously, Father Fauchelevent opened his eyes and saw M. Madeleine sitting on his truss of straw, and looking at the sleeping Cosette; Fauchelevent sat up too, and said,—

"Now that you are here, how will you manage to get in?" This remark summed up the situation, and aroused Jean Valjean from his reverie. The two men held counsel.

"In the first place," said Fauchelevent, "you must begin by not setting foot outside this cottage, neither you nor the little one. One step in the garden and we are done."

"That is true."

"Monsieur Madeleine," Fauchelevent continued, "you have arrived at a very lucky moment, I ought to say, a very unhappy one, for one of our ladies is dangerously ill. In consequence of this folk will not look much this way. It seems that she is dying, and the forty hours' prayers are being said. The whole community is aroused, and that occupies them. The person who is on the point of going off is a saint. In fact, though, we are all saints here; the only difference between them and me is that they say 'our cell,' and I say 'my cottage.' There will be a service for the dying, and then the service for the dead. For to-day we shall be all quiet here; but I do not answer for to-morrow."



## LES MISÉRABLES.

"Still," Jean Valjean observed, "this cottage is retired, it is hidden by a sort of ruin, there are trees, and it cannot be seen from the convent."

"And I may add that the nuns never approach it."

"Well?" Jean Valjean asked.

The interrogation that marked this "well" signified, "I fancy that we can remain concealed here," and it was to this interrogation that Fauchelevent replied.

"There are the little ones."

"What little ones?" Jean Valjean asked.

As Fauchelevent opened his mouth to answer, a stroke rang out from a bell.

"The nun is dead," he said, "that is the knell."

And he made Jean Valjean a sign to listen. A second stroke rang out.

"It is the passing bell, Monsieur Madeleine. The bell will go on so minute after minute for twenty-four hours, till the body leaves the church. You see they play about; at recreations they need only lose a ball, and, in spite of the prohibition, they will come and look for it here and ransack everything. Those cherubs are little devils."

"Who?" Jean Valjean asked.

"The little ones; I can tell you that you would soon be discovered. They would cry out, 'Why, it's a man!' But there is no danger to-day, for there will be no recreation. The day will be spent in prayer. You hear the bell, as I told you, one stroke a minute—it is the knell."

"I understand, Father Fauchelevent, they are boarders."

And Jean Valjean thought to himself: "It is a chance for educating Cosette."

Fauchelevent exclaimed,—

"By Job, I should think they are boarders! they would sniff round you, and then run away. To be a man here is to have the plague, as you can see; a bell is fastened to my paw as if I were a wild beast."

Jean Valjean reflected more and more deeply. "This

convent would save us," he muttered, and then added aloud,—

"Yes, the difficulty is to remain."

"No," said Fauchelevant, "it is to go out."

Jean Valjean felt the blood rush back to his heart.

"Go out?"

"Yes, M. Madeleine, in order to come in, you must go out."

And, after waiting till a knell had died out in air, Fauchelevant continued,—

"You must not be found here like that. Where do you come from? For me, you fall from heaven, because I know you, but the nuns require that people should come in by the front door."

All at once a complicated ringing of another bell could be heard.

"Ah!" said Fauchelevant, "the vocal mothers are being summoned to a Chapter—a Chapter is always held when any one dies. She died at daybreak, and they generally die at daybreak. But can't you go out by the way that you came in? Come, I don't want to ask you a question—but where did you come in?"

Jean Valjean turned pale: the mere idea of going back to that formidable street made him tremble. Come out of a forest full of tigers, and once out of it just imagine a friend advising you to go in again. Jean Valjean figured to himself the police still searching in the quarter, the agents watching, vedettes everywhere, frightful fists stretched out toward his collar, and Javert perhaps in a corner lurking for his prey.

"Impossible!" he said. "Suppose, Father Fauchelevant, that I really fell from above."

"Why, I believe so," Fauchelevant continued, "you need not tell me so. Well, there is another peal; it is to tell the porter to go and warn the municipal authorities that they should send and inform the physician of the dead, so that he may come and see there is a dead woman here. All that is the ceremony of dying. The good ladies are not very fond of such visits, for a doctor

believes in nothing; he raises the veil, and sometimes raises something else. What a hurry they have been in to warn the doctor this time! What is up, I wonder? Your little girl is still asleep; what is her name?"

"Cosette."

"Is she your daughter? I mean, are you her grandfather?"

"Yes."

"To get her out will be easy. I have my special door, which opens into the yard; I knock, the porter opens. I have my basket on my back, with the little girl in it, and go out. You will tell her to be very quiet, and she will be under the hood. I will leave her for the necessary time with an old friend of mine, a fruiteress in the Rue du Chemin Vert, who is deaf, and where there is a little bed. I will shout in her ear that it is my niece, and bid her keep her for me till to-morrow; then the little one will come in with you, for I mean to bring you in again. But how will you manage to get out?"

Jean Valjean shook his head.

"The great point is that no one sees me, Father Fauchelevant. Find means to get me out in the same way as Cosette."

Fauchelevant scratched the tip of his ear with the middle finger of his left hand, which was a sign of serious embarrassment. A third peal caused a diversion.

"That is the doctor going away," said Fauchelevant. "He has had a look and said, 'She is dead, all right.' When the doctor has countersigned the passport for Paradise, the undertakers send a coffin. If it is a mother, the mothers put her in; if a sister, the sisters; and after that I nail up. That is part of my gardening, for a gardener is a bit of a grave-digger. The coffin is placed in the vestry room which communicates with the street, and which no man is allowed to enter but the doctor, for I don't count the undertakers and myself as men. It is in this room that I nail up the coffin; the undertakers fetch it, and then—Gee-up, driver—that's the way people go to heaven. A box is brought, in which

there is nothing, and it is carried off with something in it; and that's what a burial is. *De Profundis.*"

A slanting sunbeam illumined the face of the sleeping Cosette, who opened her lips and looked like an angel imbibing light. Jean Valjean was gazing at her again, and no longer listened to Fauchelevent. Not to be heard is no reason why a man should hold his tongue, so the worthy old gardener quickly continued his chatter,—

"The grave is dug in the Vaugirard cemetery; people say that it is going to be shut up. It is an old cemetery, which has no uniform, and is going on half-pay; it is a pity, for it is convenient. I have a friend there, Father Mestrenne, the grave-digger.. The nuns of this house possess the privilege of being carried to that cemetery at nightfall; they have a decree of the prefecture expressly for them. But what events since yesterday! Mother Crucifixion is dead, and Father Madeleine——"

"Is buried," Jean Valjean said, with a sad smile.

Fauchelevent marked the word.

"Well, if you were here altogether it would be a real burial."

A fourth peal rang out. Fauchelevent quickly took down his knee-cap and put it on.

"This time it is for me. The Mother Prioress wants me. There, I have pricked myself with the tongue of my buckle. M. Madelcine, don't stir, but wait for me. There is something up; if you are hungry, there is bread, wine, and cheese."

And he left the cottage, saying, "Coming, coming."

Jean Valjean watched him hurrying across the garden as rapidly as his leg would allow, while taking a side glance at his melon frames. Less than ten minutes after, Father Fauchelevent, whose bell routed all the nuns as he passed, tapped gently at a door, and a soft voice answered, "For ever, for ever," that is to say, "Come in." It was the door of the parlour reserved expressly for the gardener, and adjoining the chapter room. The prioress, seated on the only chair in the room, was waiting for Fauchelevent.

## CHAPTER II.

## FAUCHELEVENT FACES THE DIFFICULTY.

To have an agitated and serious air is peculiar, on critical occasions, to certain characters and professions, and notably to priests and monks. At the moment when Fauchelevent entered, this double form of preoccupation was imprinted on the face of the Prioress, who was that charming and learned Mlle. de Blêmeur, or Mother Innocent, who was usually so cheerful. The gardener gave a timid bow, and remained in the doorway of the cell; the prioress, who was telling her beads, raised her eyes, and said,—

“ Oh, it is you, Father Fauvent ? ”

This abbreviation had been adopted in the convent. Fauchelevent began his bows again.

“ Father Fauvent, I summoned you.”

“ Here I am, Reverend Mother.”

“ I wish to speak with you.”

“ And I, on my side,” said Fauchelevent, with a boldness which made him tremble inwards, “ have something to say to the most Reverend Mother.”

The prioress looked at him.

“ Ah ! you have a communication to make to me ? ”

“ A request.”

“ Well, speak.”

Fauchelevent, the ex-notary, belonged to that class of peasants who possess coolness. A certain skilful ignorance is a strength ; people do not suspect it, and you have them. During the two years Fauchelevent had lived in the convent, he had made a success in the community, and while alone and attending to his gardening, he had nothing else to do than be curious. Remote as he was from all these veiled women, he saw nothing before him but an agitation of shadows, but, by constant attention and penetration, he had succeeded in putting flesh on these phantoms, and these dead lived for him. He was like a deaf man whose sight is im-

proved, and a blind man whose hearing is sharpened. He had turned his mind to discover the meaning of the various peals, and had succeeded, so that his enigmatical and mysterious convent had nothing hidden from him ; and this sphynx whispered all its secrets in his ear. Fauchelevent, while knowing everything, concealed everything, and that was his art ; the whole convent believed him to be stupid, and that is a great merit in religion. The vocal mother set value on Fauchelevent, for he was a curious, dumb man, and inspired confidence. Moreover, he was regular, and only went out when absolutely compelled by the claims of his orchard or kitchen garden, and this discretion was placed to his credit. But, for all that, he had made two men talk—in the convent, the porter, and he thus knew all the peculiarities of the parlour ; and at the cemetery the grave-digger, and he knew the regularities of the burial ; so that he possessed a double light about these nuns—the light of life and the light of death. But he made no abuse of his knowledge, and the congregation were attached to him. Old, lame, seeing nothing, and probably rather deaf ; what qualifications ! It would be difficult to fill up his place. The good man, with the assurance of a servant who knows his value, began a rustic address to the prioress, which was rather diffuse and very artful. He talked a good deal about his age, his infirmities, years henceforward, reckoning double for him, the growing demands of his work, nights to pass, as, for instance, the last, in which he was obliged to draw matting over the melon frames owing to the moon ; and he ended with this, that he had a brother (the prioress gave a start)—a brother who was not young (a second start, but not so alarmed)—that if leave were granted, this brother would come and live with him and help him ; that he was an excellent gardener, and would be of more use to the community than himself was ; and that, on the other hand, if his brother's services were not accepted, as he, the elder, felt worn out and unequal to his work, he would be compelled, to his great regret, to give up his situation ; and that his brother

had a little girl whom he would bring with him, and who would be brought in the house, and might—who knew?—become a nun some day. When he had finished speaking, the prioress broke off her occupation of letting the beads of her rosary slip through her fingers, and said,—

“Could you procure a strong iron bar between this and to-night?”

“What to do?”

“To act as a lever.”

“Yes, Reverend Mother,” Father Fauchelevent replied.

The prioress, without adding a syllable, rose and walked into the adjoining room, where the Chapter was assembled. Fauchelevent was left alone.

### CHAPTER III.

#### MOTHER INNOCENT.

ABOUT a quarter of an hour passed ere the prioress came in again and sat down on her chair. The two speakers appeared preoccupied. We will do our best to record their conversation accurately.

“Father Fauvent?”

“Reverend Mother?”

“Do you know the chapel?”

“I have a little cage in it where I hear mass and the offices.”

“And have you gone into the choir for your work?”

“Two or three times.”

“A stone will have to be lifted.”

“What stone?”

“The one at the side of the altar.”

“The stone that closes the vault?”

“Yes.”

“That is a job where two men would be useful.”

“Mother Ascension, who is as strong as a man, will help you.”

“A woman is never a man.”

"We have only a woman to help you, and everybody does the best. Although Döm. Mabillon gives four hundred and seventeen epistles of St. Bernard, and Merlonus Horstius only gives three hundred and sixty-seven, I do not despise Merlonus Horstius."

"Nor I."

"The merit is to work according to your strength. A convent is not a work-yard."

"And a woman is not a man. My brother is a strong fellow!"

"And, then, you will have a crowbar."

"It is the only sort of key that fits such locks."

"There is a ring in the stone."

"I will put the crowbar through it."

"And the stone works on hinges."

"All right, Reverend Mother, I will open the vault."

"And the four chanting mothers will help you."

"And when the vault is open?"

"You must shut it again."

"Is that all?"

"No."

"Give me your orders, most Reverend Mother."

"Fauvent, we place confidence in you."

"I am here to do everything."

"And to hold your tongue about everything."

"Yes, Reverend Mother."

"When the vault is opened——"

"I will shut it again."

"But, first——"

"What, Reverend Mother?"

"You must let down something into it."

There was a silence, and the prioress, after a pout of the lower lip, which looked like hesitation, continued,—

"Father Fauvent!"

"Reverend Mother?"

"You are aware that a mother died this morning."

"No."

"Did you not hear the bell?"

"Nothing can be heard at the end of the garden."



"Really now?"

"I can hardly distinguish my own ring."

"She died at daybreak."

"And besides, this morning, the wind did not blow in my direction."

"It is Mother Crucifixion, a blessed saint."

The prioress was silent, moved her lips for a moment, as if in mental prayer, and went on,—

"Three years ago, through merely seeing Mother Crucifixion pray, a Jansenist, Madame de Bethune, became orthodox."

"Oh, yes, I hear the passing bell now, Reverend Mother."

"The Mothers have carried her into the dead-room adjoining the church."

"I know."

"No other man but you can or ought to enter that room, so keep careful watch. It would be a fine thing to see another man enter the charnel house!"

"More often."

"Eh?"

"More often."

"What do you mean?"

"I say more often."

"More often than what?"

"Reverend Mother, I did not say more often than what, but more often."

"I do not understand you; why do you say more often?"

"To say the same as yourself, Reverend Mother."

"But I did not say more often."

"You did not say it, but I said it to say the same as you."

At this moment nine o'clock struck.

"At nine in the morning and every hour be the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar blessed and adored," said the prioress.

"Amen," said Fauchelevent.

The hour struck opportunely, for it cut short the "more

often." It is probable that without it the prioress and Fauchelevent would never have got out of this tangle. Fauchelevent wiped his forehead, and the prioress gave another internal murmur, and then raised her voice.

"In her lifetime Mother Crucifixion performed conversions; after her death she will perform miracles."

"She will do them," Fauchelevent said, determined not to give ground again.

"Father Fauvent, the community was blessed in Mother Crucifixion. Of course it is not granted to every one to die, like Cardinal de Berulle, while reading the Holy Mass, and exhale his soul to GOD while uttering the words, *Hanc igitur oblationem*. But though she did not attain such happiness, Mother Crucifixion had a very blessed death. She retained her senses up to the last moment; she spoke to us, and then conversed with the angels. She gave us her last commands; if you had more faith, and if you had been in her cell, she would have cured your leg by touching it. She smiled, and we all felt that she was living again in GOD—there was Paradise in such a death."

Fauchelevent fancied that it was the end of a prayer; "Amen," he said.

"Father Fauvent, what the dead wish must be carried out."

The prioress told a few beads. Fauchelevent held his tongue; then the lady continued,—

"I have consulted on this point several Ecclesiastics, who labour in our Lord, who turn their attention to the exercise of clerical life, and reap an admirable harvest."

"Reverend Mother, the knell is heard better here than in the garden."

"Moreover, she is more than a dead woman—she is a saint."

"Like yourself, Reverend Mother."

"She slept in her coffin for more than twenty years, by express permission of our Holy Father Pius VII."

"The same who crowned the Emp—Bonaparte."

For a clever man like Fauchelevent the recollection was

ill-timed. Luckily the prioress, who was deep in thought, did not hear him, and went on,—

“ Father Fauvent ? ”

“ Reverend Mother ? ”

“ Saint Diodorus, Archbishop of Cappadocia, requested that only one word should be inscribed on his tombstone, *Acarus*, which means a worm, and it was done. Is that true ? ”

“ Yes, Reverend Mother.”

“ The blessed Mezzocanes, Abbot of Aquila, wished to be buried under a gallows, and it was done.”

“ That is true.”

“ Saint Terentius, Bishop of Oporto, at the mouth of the Tiber on the sea, ordered that there should be engraved on his tombstone the symbol which was placed on the grave of parricides, in the hope that passers-by would spit on his tomb ; and it was done, for the dead ought to be obeyed.”

“ So be it.”

“ The body of Bernard Guidonis, who was born in France, near Roche Abeille, was, as he ordered, and in defiance of the King of Castille, conveyed to the Church of the Dominicans of Limoges, although Bernard Guidonis was Bishop of Tuy in Spain. Can you say the contrary ? ”

“ Certainly not, Reverend Mother.”

“ The fact is attested by Plantavit de la Fosse.”

A few beads were told in silence, and then the prioress resumed,—

“ Father Fauvent, Mother Crucifixion will be buried in the coffin in which she has slept for twenty years.”

“ That is but fair.”

“ It is a continuation of sleep.”

“ Then I shall have to nail her up in that coffin ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ And we shall not employ the undertaker’s coffin ? ”

“ Exactly.”

“ I am at the orders of the most Reverend Community.”

"The four singing mothers will help you."

"To nail up the coffin? I do not want them."

"No, to let it down."

"Where?"

"Into the vault."

"What vault?"

"Under the altar."

Fauchelevant started

"The vault under the altar?"

"Yes."

"But——"

"You have an iron bar."

"Yes, still——"

"You will lift the stone by passing the bar through the ring."

"But——"

"We must obey the dead. It was the last wish of Mother Crucifixion to be buried in the vault under the chapel altar, not to be placed in profane soil, and to remain when dead at the place where she had prayed when alive. She asked this of us, indeed ordered it."

"But it is forbidden."

"Forbidden by man, ordered by God."

"Suppose it oozed out?"

"We have confidence in you."

"Oh! I am a stone of your wall."

"The Chapter is assembled; the vocal mothers whom I have just consulted once again, and who are deliberating, have decided that Mother Crucifixion should be interred according to her wish, under our altar. Only think, Father Fauvent, if miracles were to take place here! what a glory in God for the community! miracles issue from tombs."

"But, Reverend Mother, supposing the Sanitary Commissioner——"

"St. Benedict II. in a matter of burial resisted Constantine Pogonatus."

"Still the Inspector——"

"Chonodemairus, one of the seven German kings who

entered Gaul during the empire of Constantius, expressly recognized the right of monks to be buried in religion, that is to say, beneath the altar."

"But the Inspector of the Prefecture——"

"The world is as nothing in presence of the cross. Martin, eleventh general of the Carthusians, gave his order this device, *Stat crux dum volvitur orbis*."

"Amen!" Fauchelevent said, who imperturbably got out of the scrape in that way whenever he heard Latin.

Any audience answers for a person who has been a long time silent. On the day when Gymnastoras, the rhetorician, left prison, with a great many dilemmas and syllogisms in his inside, he stopped before the first tree he came to, harangued it, and made mighty efforts to convince it. The prioress, whose tongue was usually stopped by the dam of silence, and whose reservoir was overfull, rose and exclaimed with the loquacity of a raised sluice,—

"I have on my right hand Benedict, and on my left Bernard. Who is Bernard? the first abbot of Clairvaux. Fontaines in Burgundy is a blessed spot for having witnessed his birth. His father's name was Têcelin, his mother's Alethe; he began with Citeaux to end with Clairvaux; he was ordained Abbot by William de Champeaux, Bishop of Chalons sur Saône; he had seven hundred novices, and founded one hundred and sixty monasteries; he overthrew Abeilard at the Council of Sens in 1140, and Pierre de Bruys and Henry his disciple, as well as an errant sect called the Apostolicals; he confounded Arnold of Brescia, crushed the Monk Raoul, the Jew-killer, led the Council of Reims in 1148, condemned Gilbert de la Préu, Bishop of Poitiers, and Eon de l'Etoile, settled the disputes of the princes, enlightened King Louis the young, advised Pope Eugene III., regulated the temple, preached the Crusade, and performed two hundred and fifty miracles in his life, and as many as thirty-seven in one day. Who is Benedict? He is the patriarch of Monte Cassino; he is the second founder of the claustral Holiness, the Basil of the West. His order has produced fourteen popes, two hundred cardinals, fifty patriarchs, one

thousand six hundred archbishops, four thousand six hundred bishops, four emperors, twelve empresses, forty-six kings, forty-one queens, three thousand six hundred canonized saints, and still exists after one thousand four hundred years. On one side St. Bernard, on the other the Sanitary Inspector ! On one side St. Benedict, on the other the Inspector of the streets ! What do we know about the State, the regulations, the administration, and the public undertaker ? Any witnesses would be indignant at the way in which we are treated ; we have not even the right to give our dust to Christ ! your salubrity is a revolutionary invention ! God subordinate to a Police Inspector, such is the age ! Silence, Fauvent ! ”

Fauchelevant did not feel very comfortable under this douche, but the prioress continued,—

“ The right of the monasteries to sepulture is indubitable, and it can only be denied by fanatics and schismatics. We live in times of terrible confusion ; people do not know what they should, and know what they should not. Men are crass and impious, and there are people at the present day who cannot distinguish between the most mighty St. Bernard and that Bernard called of the poor Catholics, a certain worthy ecclesiastic who lived in the 13th century. Others are so blasphemous as to compare the scaffold of Louis XVI. with the cross of our Saviour. Louis XVI. was only a king. There are no just or unjust persons left : the name of Voltaire is known and that of Cæsar de Bus unknown—but Cæsar de Bus is blessed, while Voltaire is condemned. The last Archbishop, Cardinal de Perigord, did not even know that Charles de Gondrin succeeded Berullus, and François Bourgoïn Gondrin, and Jean François Senault Bourgoïn, and Father de Sainte Marthe Jean François Senault. The name of Father Coton is known, not because he was one of the three who urged the foundation of the Oratory, but because he supplied the Huguenot King Henri IV. with material for an oath. What makes people of the world like St. Francis de Sales is that he cheated at play. And, then, religion is attacked, and why ? Because there have

been bad priests, because Sagittarius, Bishop of Gap, was brother of Salonces, Bishop of Embrun, and both followed Mommolus. Of what consequence is all this? Does it prevent Martin of Tours from being a saint, and having given one half of his cloak to a poor man? The saints are persecuted, and people close their eyes against the truth. They are accustomed to the darkness, and the most ferocious beasts are blind beasts. No one thinks of Hell for good; oh! the wicked people. 'By the king's order' means at the present day by order of the Revolution. People forget what they owe, either to the living or the dead. We are forbidden to die in holiness, the tomb is a civil office, and this is horrible. St. Leon II. wrote two letters expressly—one to Peter Notarius, the other to the King of the Visigoths—to combat and reject, in questions that affect the dead, the authority of the exarchus and the supremacy of the Emperor. Gautin, Bishop of Chalons, opposed Otho, Duke of Burgundy, in this matter. The old magistrates coincided, and we formerly had a voice in the Chapter itself upon temporal affairs. The Abbot of Citeaux, general of the order, was Councillor by right of birth in the Parliament of Burgundy. We do what we like with our dead. Is not the body of Saint Benedict himself in France at the Abbey of Fleury, called Saint Benedict in the Loire, although he died at Monte Cassino in Italy, on Saturday March 21, 543? All this is incontestable. I abhor the Psallants, I hate the Prayers, I execrate heretics, but I should detest even worse any one who opposed my views in this matter. It is only necessary to read Arnoul Weon, Gabriel Bucelinus, Tritheme, Mauroleus, and Don Luc d'Achery."

The prioress breathed, and then turned to Fauchelevent. "Father Fauvent, is it settled?"

"It is, Reverend Mother."

"Can we reckon on you?"

"I will obey."

"Very good."

"I am entirely devoted to the convent."

"You will close the coffin, and the sisters will carry it

into the chapel. The office for the dead will be read, and then we shall return to the cloisters. Between eleven and twelve you will come with your iron bar, and everything will be performed with the utmost secrecy: there will be no one in the chapel but the four singing mothers, Mother Ascension, and yourself."

"And the sister at the stake?"

"She will not turn round."

"But she will hear."

"She will not listen. Moreover, what the convent knows the world is ignorant of."

There was another pause, after which the prioress continued,—

"You will remove your bell, for it is unnecessary for the sister at the stake to notice your presence."

"Reverend Mother?"

"What is it, Father Fauvent?"

"Has the physician of the dead paid his visit?"

"He will do so at four o'clock to-day: the bell has been rung to give him notice. But do you not hear any ringing?"

"I only pay attention to my own summons."

"Very good, Father Fauvent."

"Reverend Mother, I shall require a lever at least six foot long."

"Where will you get it?"

"Where there are plenty of gratings there are plenty of iron bars. I have a pile of old iron at the end of the garden."

"About three-quarters of an hour before midnight, do not forget."

"Reverend Mother?"

"What is it?"

"If you have other jobs like this, my brother is a strong fellow for you, a Turk."

"You will be as quick as possible."

"I cannot do things quickly, for I am infirm, and for that reason require an assistant. I halt."

"Halting is not a crime, and may be a blessing. The



Emperor Henry II., who combated the Antipope Gregory and re-established Benedict VIII., has two surnames—the saint and the cripple.”

“Two excellent surtouts,” muttered Fauchelevant, who really was rather hard of hearing.

“Father Fauvent, now I think of it, take a whole hour, for it will not be too much. Be at the High Altar with your crowbar at eleven o’clock, for the service begins at midnight, and all must be finished a good quarter of an hour previously.”

“I will do everything to prove my zeal to the community. I will nail up the coffin, and be in the chapel at eleven o’clock precisely; the singing mothers and Mother Ascension will be there. Two men would be better, but no matter; I shall have my crowbar, we will open the vault, let down the coffin, and close it again. After that there will not be a trace, and the government will have no suspicion. Reverend Mother, is all arranged thus?”

“No.”

“What is there still?”

“There is the empty coffin.”

This was a difficulty; Fauchelevant thought of and on it, and so did the prioress.

“Father Fauvent, what must be done with the other coffin?”

“It must be buried.”

“Empty?”

Another silence. Fauchelevant made with his left hand that sort of gesture which dismisses a disagreeable question.

“Reverend Mother, I will nail up the coffin and cover it with the pall.”

“Yes, but the bearers, while placing it in the hearse, and lowering it into the grave, will soon perceive that there is nothing in it.”

“Oh, the de——!” Fauchelevant exclaimed. The prioress began a cross, and looked intently at the gardener; the *evil* stuck in his throat, and he hastily improvised an expedient to cause the oath to be forgotten.

"Reverend Mother, I will put earth in the coffin, which will produce the effect of the body."

"You are right, for earth is the same as a human being. So you will manage the empty coffin?"

"I take it on myself."

The face of the prioress, which had hitherto been troubled and clouded, now grew serene. She made the sign of a superior dismissing an inferior, and Fauchelevent walked toward the door. As he was going out the prioress gently raised her voice.

"Father Fauvent, I am satisfied with you; to-morrow, after the interment, bring me your brother, and tell him to bring me his daughter."

## CHAPTER IV.

### A PLAN OF ESCAPE.

THE strides of halting men are like the glances of squinters, they do not reach their point very rapidly. Monsieur Fauchelevent was perplexed, and he spent upwards of a quarter of an hour in returning to the garden cottage. Cosette was awake, and Jean Valjean had seated her by the fireside. At the moment when Fauchelevent entered Jean Valjean was pointing to the gardener's basket leaning in a corner, and saying to her,—

"Listen to me carefully, little Cosette. We are obliged to leave this house, but shall return to it, and be very happy. The good man will carry you out in that thing upon his back, and you will wait for me with a lady till I come to fetch you. If you do not wish Madame Thénardier to catch you again, obey and say not a word."

Cosette nodded her head gravely; at the sound Fauchelevent made in opening the door Valjean turned round.

"Well?"

"All is arranged, and nothing is so," said Fauchelevent. "I have leave to bring you in, but to bring you in you must go out. That is the difficulty; it is easy enough with the little one."

" You will carry her out ? "

" Will she be quiet ? "

" I answer for that."

" But you, Father Madeleine ? "

And after an anxious silence Fauchelevant cried,—

" Why, go out in the same way as you came in."

Jean Valjean, as on the first occasion, confined himself to saying, " Impossible ! "

Fauchelevant, speaking to himself rather than to Jean Valjean, growled,—

" There is another thing that troubles me. I said that I would put earth in it, but now I come to think of it, earth instead of a body will not do, for it will move about, and the men will notice it. You understand, Father Madeleine, the government will perceive the trick ? "

Jean Valjean looked at him, and fancied that he must be raving; Fauchelevant continued,—

" How the deuce are you going to get out ? for everything must be settled to-morrow, as the prioress expects you then."

Then he explained to Valjean that it was a reward for a service which he, Fauchelevant, was rendering the community. It was part of his duty to attend to the funerals, nail up the coffin, and assist the grave-digger at the cemetery. The nun who had died that morning requested to be buried in the coffin which served her as bed in the vault under the altar of the chapel. This was forbidden by the police regulations, but she was one of those women to whom nothing could be refused. The prioress and the vocal mothers intended to carry out the wishes of the deceased, and so, all the worse for the government. He, Fauchelevant, would nail up the coffin in the cell, lift the stone in the chapel, and let down the body into the vault. As a reward for this the prioress would admit into the house his brother as gardener, and his niece as boarder. The prioress had told him to bring his brother the next day after the pretended funeral, but he could not bring M. Madeleine in from outside if he were not there. This

was his first embarrassment, and then he had a second in the empty coffin.

"What do you mean by the empty coffin?" Valjean asked.

"Why, the government coffin."

"I do not understand you."

"A nun dies, and the physician of the municipality comes and says, 'There is a nun dead.' Government sends a coffin, the next day it sends a hearse and undertaker's men to fetch the coffin and carry it to the cemetery. They will come and lift the coffin, and there's nothing in it."

"Put something in it."

"A dead person? I haven't such a thing."

"Well, then, a living one."

"Who?"

"Myself," said Jean Valjean.

Fauchelevant, who was seated, sprang up as if a shell had exploded under his chair.

"You?"

"Why not?"

Jean Valjean had one of those rare smiles which resembled a sunbeam in a wintry sky.

"You know that you said, Fauchelevant, Mother Crucifixion is dead, and I added, 'And Father Madeleine is buried.' It will be so."

"Oh, you are joking, not speaking seriously."

"Most seriously. Must I not get out of here?"

"Of course."

"I told you to find for me a basket and a cover too."

"Well?"

"The basket will be of deal, and the cover of black cloth."

"No, white cloth. Nuns are buried in white."

"All right, then, white cloth."

"You are not like other men, Father Madeleine."

To see such ideas, which are nought but the wild and daring inventions of the hulks, issue from his peaceful surrounding, and mingled with what he called "the slow

pace of the convent," produced in Fauchelevent a stupor comparable to that which a passer-by would feel on seeing a whaler fishing in the gutter of the Rue St. Denis. Jean Valjean went on.

"The point is to get out of here unseen, and that is a way. But just tell me, how does it all take place? where is the coffin?"

"The empty one?"

"Yes."

"In what is called the dead-house. It is upon two trestles, and covered with the pall."

"What is the length of the coffin?"

"Six feet."

"What is this dead-house?"

"A ground floor room with a grated window looking on the garden, and two doors, one leading to the church the other to the convent."

"What church?"

"The street church, the one open to everybody."

"Have you the keys of these doors?"

"No, I have the key of the one communicating with the convent, but the porter has the other."

"When does he open it?"

"Only to let the men pass who come to fetch the body. When the coffin has gone out the door is locked again."

"Who nails up the coffin?"

"I do."

"Who places the pall over it?"

"I do."

"Are you alone?"

"No other man, excepting the doctor, is allowed to enter the dead-house. It is written on the wall."

"Could you hide me in that house to-night, when all are asleep in the convent?"

"No, but I can hide you in a dark hole opening out of the dead-house, in which I put the burial tools, of which I have the key."

"At what hour to-morrow will the hearse come to fetch the body?"

"At three in the afternoon. The interment takes place at the Vaugiraud cemetery a little before nightfall, for the ground is not very near here."

"I will remain concealed in your tool-house during the night and morning. How about food? for I shall be hungry."

"I will bring you some."

"You can nail me up in the coffin at two o'clock." Fauchelevent recoiled and cracked his finger-bones.

"Oh, it is impossible!"

"Nonsense! to take a hammer and drive nails into a board?"

What seemed to Fauchelevent extraordinary was, we repeat, quite simple to Jean Valjean, for he had gone through worse straits, and any man who has been a prisoner knows how to reduce himself to the diameter of the mode of escape. A prisoner is affected by flight, just as a sick man is by the crisis which saves or destroys him, and an escape is a cure. What will not a man undergo for the sake of being cured? To be nailed up and carried in a box, to live for a long time in a packing case, to find air where there is none, to economize one's breath for hours, to manage to choke without dying, was one of Jean Valjean's melancholy talents.

Besides, a coffin in which there is a living body, this convict's expedient, is also an imperial expedient. If we may believe the monk Austin Castillejo, it was the way employed by Charles V., who, wishing to see La Plombes for the last time after his abdication, contrived to get her in and out of the monastery of Saint Juste. Fauchelevent, when he had slightly recovered, exclaimed,—

"But how will you manage to breathe?"

"I will manage it."

"In that box? Why, the mere idea of it chokes me."

"You have a gimlet. You will make a few holes round the mouth, and nail down the lid, without closing it tightly."

"Good! And suppose you cough or sneeze?"

"A man who is escaping does not do such a thing."

And Jean Valjean added,—

“Father Fauchelevant, we must make up our mind : I must either be captured here or go out in the hearse.”

Everybody must have noticed the fancy which cats have of stopping and sniffing in a half-opened door, and most of us have said to it, “Pray come in.” There are men who, when an incident stands half opened before them, have also a tendency to remain undecided between two resolutions, at the risk of being crushed by destiny as it hurriedly closes the adventure. The more prudent, cats though they are, and because they are cats, often incur greater danger than the more daring. Fauchelevant was of this hesitating nature ; still, Jean Valjean’s coolness involuntarily mastered him, and he growled,—

“After all, there is no other way.”

Jean Valjean continued,—

“The only thing I am anxious about is what will take place at the cemetery.”

“There is the very thing I am not anxious about,” said Fauchelevant ; “if you feel sure of getting out of the coffin, I feel sure of getting you out of the grave. The grave-digger is a friend of mine and a drunkard of the name of Father Mestienne ; he puts the dead in the grave, and I put the grave-digger in my pocket. I will tell you what will occur. We shall arrive a little before twilight, three quarters of an hour before the cemetery gates are closed. The hearse will drive up to the grave, and I shall follow, for that is my business. I shall have a hammer, a chisel, and pincers in my pocket : the hearse stops, the undertaker knots a cord round your coffin and lets you down ; the priest says the prayers, makes the sign of the cross, sprinkles the holy water, and bolts ; I remain alone with Father Mestienne, and he is a friend of mine, I tell you. One of two things is certain ; he will either be drunk or not be drunk. If he is not drunk, I shall say to him, “Come and have a drain before the *Bon Coing* closes.” I take him away, make him drunk, which does not take long, as he has always made a beginning ; I lay him under the table, take his card, and return to the cemetery with-

out him. You will have only to deal with me. If he is drunk I shall say to him, 'Be off, I will do your work for you.' He will go, and I get you out of the hole."

Jean Valjean held out his hand, which Father Fauchelevent seized with a touching peasant devotion.

"It is settled, Father Fauchelevent. All will go well."

"Providing that nothing goes amiss," Fauchelevent thought; "how terrible that would be."

## CHAPTER V.

### A DRUNKARD IS NOT IMMORTAL.

THE next day, as the sun was setting, the few passers-by on the Boulevard du Maine took off their hats to an old-fashioned hearse, ornamented with death's head, thigh-bones, and tears. In this hearse was a coffin covered with a white pall, on which lay an enormous black cross, like a tall, dead woman with hanging arms. A draped carriage, in which could be noticed a priest in his surplice, and a chorister in his red-skull cap, followed. Two mutes in a grey uniform with black facings walked on the right and left of the hearse, while behind them came an old man in workman's garb, who halted. The procession proceeded toward the Vaugirard cemetery. This cemetery formed an exception to the others in Paris. It had its peculiar usages, just as it had a large gate and a side gate, which old people in the quarters, tenacious to old names, called the horseman's gate and the footman's gate. The Bernardo-Benedictines of the Little Picpus had obtained, as we have stated, permission to be buried there in a separate corner, and by night, because the cemetery had formerly belonged to their community. The grave-diggers, having thus an evening duty in summer and a night duty in winter, were subjected to special rules. The gates of Parisian cemeteries were closed at that period at sunset, and as this was a police measure the Vaugirard cemetery was subjected to it like the rest. The two gates adjoined



a pavilion, built by the architect Perronet, in which the porter lived, and they were inexorably closed at the moment when the sun disappeared behind the dome of the Invalides. If any grave-digger were detained at that moment in the cemetery, he had only one way to get out, his card, with which the undertaker's department supplied him. There was a species of letter-box in the shutter of the porter's window; the grave-digger threw his card into this box, the porter heard it fall, pulled the string, and the small gate opened. If the grave-digger had not his card he gave his name; the porter got up, recognized him and opened the gate with his key; but in that case the grave-digger paid a fine of fifteen francs.

The sun had not yet set when the hearse with the white pall and black cross entered the avenue of this cemetery, and the halting man who followed it was no other than Fauchelevent. The interment of Mother Crucifixion in the vault under the altar, getting Cosette out, and introducing Jean Valjean into the dead-house, had been effected without the slightest hitch.

Fauchelevent limped after the hearse with great satisfaction; his twin plots, the one with the nuns, the other with M. Madeleine, one for, the other against, the convent were getting on famously. The calmness of Jean Valjean was one of those powerful tranquillities which are contagious, and Fauchelevent no longer doubted of success. What he still had to do was nothing; during the last two years he had made the grave-digger drunk a dozen times, and he played with him. He could do what he liked with Father Mestienne. The gardener's security was complete.

At the moment when the procession entered the avenue leading to the cemetery, Fauchelevent looked at the hearse with delight, and rubbed his huge hands as he said in a low voice, "What a lark!"

All at once the hearse stopped; it had reached the gates, and the permission for burying must be shown. The undertaker conversed with the porter, and during this colloquy, which occupied two or three minutes, a stranger stationed himself behind the hearse by Fauche-

levent's side. He was a sort of workman wearing a jacket with wide pockets, and holding a spade under his arm. Fauchelevent looked at the stranger, and asked him,—

"Who are you?"

The man replied, "The grave-digger."

If any man could survive a cannon-ball right in the middle of his chest, he would cut such a face as Fauchelevent did.

"Why, Father Mestienne is the grave-digger."

"Was."

"How, was?"

"He is dead."

Fauchelevent was prepared for anything except this, that a grave-digger could die; and, yet, it is true that grave-diggers themselves die; while digging holes for others, they prepare one for themselves. Fauchelevent stood with widely-opened mouth, and had scarce strength to stammer,—

"Why, it is impossible."

"It is the case."

"But the grave-digger," he went on feebly, "is Father Mestienne."

"After Napoleon, Louis XVIII. After Mestienne, Gribier. Rustic, my name is Gribier."

Fauchelevent, who was very pale, stared at Gribier; he was a tall, thin, livid, thoroughly funereal man. He looked like a broken-down doctor who had turned grave-digger. Fauchelevent burst into a laugh.

"Ah, what funny things do happen! Father Mestienne is dead; little Father Mestienne is dead, but long live little Father Lenoir! Do you know who he is? A bottle of Surène, bully! real Paris Surène. And so Father Mestienne is dead; I feel sorry for him, as he was a jolly fellow. But you are a jolly fellow too, are you not, comrade? We will drink a glass together, eh?"

The man answered, "I have studied, and I never drink."

The hearse had set out again, and was now going along

the main avenue. Fauchelevent had decreased his pace, and limped more through anxiety than infirmity. The grave-digger walked in front of him, and Fauchelevent once again surveyed this unknown Gribier. He was one of those men who, when young, look old, and who, though thin, are very strong.

"Comrade!" Fauchelevent cried.

The man turned round.

"I am the convent grave-digger."

"My colleague," the man said.

Fauchelevent, uneducated though very sharp, understood that he had to deal with a formidable species, a fine speaker; he growled,—

"So, then, Father Mestienne is dead."

The man answered, "Completely. Le bon Dieu consulted His bill-book. Father Mestienne was due, and so Father Mestienne is dead."

Fauchelevent repeated mechanically, "Le bon Dieu."

"Le bon Dieu," the man said authoritatively, "with philosophers the Eternal Father, with Jacobins the Supreme Being."

"Are we not going to form an acquaintance?" Fauchelevent stammered.

"It is formed. You are a rustic, I am a Parisian."

"People never know one another thoroughly till they have drunk together, for when a man empties his glass he empties his heart. You will come and drink with me; such an offer cannot be refused."

"Work first."

Fauchelevent thought, "It's all over with me."

They had only a few more yards to go before reaching the nuns' corner. The grave-digger added,—

"Peasant, I have seven children to feed, and as they must eat I must not drink."

And he added with the satisfaction of a serious man who is laying down an axiom,—

"Their hunger is the enemy of my thirst."

The hearse left the main avenue, and turned down a smaller one, which indicated the immediate proximity of

the grave. Fauchelevent reduced his pace but could not reduce that of the hearse. Fortunately, the ground was saturated with winter rains, and rendered their progress slower. He drew closer to the grave-digger.

"There is such a capital Argenteuil wine," he muttered.

"Villager," the man replied, "I was not meant to be a grave-digger. My father was porter at the Prytanæum, and destined me for literature, but he was unfortunate in his speculations on the Exchange. Hence I was compelled to relinquish the profession of author, but I am still a public writer."

"Then you are not a grave-digger?" Fauchelevent retorted, clinging to this very weak branch.

"One does not prevent the other, so I accumulate——." Fauchelevent did not understand the last word.

"Let us go to drink," he said.

Here a remark is necessary. Fauchelevent, however great his agony might be, proposed drinking, but did not explain himself on one point. Who was to pay? As a general rule, Fauchelevent proposed and Father Mestienne paid. A proposal to drink evidently resulted from the new situation created by the new grave-digger, and that proposal the gardener must make, but he left, not undesignedly, the proverbial quarter of an hour called Rabelais' in obscurity. However affected Fauchelevent might be, he did not feel anxious to pay.

The grave-digger continued with a grand smile, "As a man must live, I accepted Father Mestienne's inheritance. When a man has nearly completed his course of studies, he is a philosopher, and I have added the work of my arms to that of my hand. I have my writer's stall at the market in the Rue de Sèvres—you know, the umbrella market? All the cooks of the Croix Rouge apply to me, and I compose their declarations to the soldiers. In the morning I write billets-doux, in the evening I dig graves; such is life, Rustic."

The hearse went on, and Fauchelevent looked all about him with the greatest anxiety; heavy drops of perspiration fell from his forehead.

## LES MISÉRABLES.

"Still," the grave-digger continued, "a man cannot serve two mistresses, and I must choose between the pick and the pen. The pick ruins my hand."

The hearse stopped; the chorister got out of the coach, and then the priest: one of the small front wheels of the hearse was slightly raised by a heap of earth, beyond which an open grave was visible.

"Here's another lark!" Fauchelevant said in consternation.

## CHAPTER VI.

### BETWEEN FOUR PLANKS.

Who was in the coffin? It was, as we know, Jean Valjean, who had so contrived as to be able to live in it, and could almost breathe. It is a strange thing to what an extent security of conscience produces other security, the whole combination premeditated by Valjean had been going on since the previous evening, and was still going on excellently. He calculated, like Fauchelevant, upon Father Mestienne, and did not suspect the end. Never was a situation more critical or a calamity more perfect.

The four planks of a coffin exhale a species of terrible peace, and it seemed as if some of the repose of the dead were blended with Valjean's tranquillity. From the bottom of this coffin he had been able to follow and did follow all the phases of the formidable drama which he performed with death. A short while after Fauchelevant had finished nailing down the coffin lid, Valjean felt himself raised and then carried along. Through the cessation of the jolting he felt that they had passed from the pavement to the stamped earth—that is to say, the hearse had left the streets and had turned into the boulevards. From the hollow sound he guessed that he was crossing the bridge of Austerlitz; at the first halt he understood that he was entering the cemetery, and at the second he said to himself, "Here is the grave."

He suddenly felt hands seize the coffin, and then noticed a rumbling grating on the planks ; he guessed that a rope was being fastened round the coffin in order to let it down into the grave. After this, he felt dizzy for a while ; in all probability the men had made the coffin oscillate and let the head down before the feet. He perfectly recovered when he found himself horizontal and motionless. He felt a certain amount of cold, as a chill and solemn voice was raised above him, and he heard the Latin words, which he did not understand, pass away so slowly that he could distinguish each in turn.

*Qui dormiunt in terræ pulvere, evigilabunt ; alii in vitam æternam, et alii in opprobrium, ut videant semper.*

A boyish voice said, *De profundis.*

The grave voice began again,—

*Requiem æternam dona ei, Domine.*

The boyish voice replied,—

*Et lux perpetua luceat ei !*

He heard something like the gentle plash of rain upon the coffin lid ; it was probably the holy water. He thought, “ It is finished ; and I only need a little patience. The priest will go away, and Fauchelevent take Mestienne off to drink. I shall be left here till Fauchelevent returns alone, and I shall get out. It will take about an hour.”

The grave voice continued,—

*Requiescat in pace.*

And the boyish voice said,—

*Amen.*

Jean Valjean, who was listening attentively, heard something like the sound of retreating footsteps.

“ They are going away,” he thought. “ I am alone.” All at once he heard over his head a noise which appeared to him like a thunder-clap ; it was a spadeful of earth falling on the coffin—a second spadeful fell, and one of the holes by which he breathed was stopped—a third shovelful fell, and then a fourth. There are some things stronger than the strongest man, and Jean Valjean lost his senses.

# LES MISÉRABLES.

## CHAPTER VII.

### FAUCHELEVENT HAS AN IDEA.

THIS is what took place above the coffin which contained Jean Valjean. When the hearse had gone away, when the priest and the chorister had driven off in the coach, Fauchelevent, who did not once take his eyes off the grave-digger, saw him stoop down and seize his spade, which was standing upright in the heap of earth. Fauchelevent formed a supreme resolution: he placed himself between the grave and the digger, folded his arms, and said,—

“ I’ll pay.”

The grave-digger looked at him in amazement, and replied,—

“ What, peasant ? ”

Fauchelevent repeated, “ I’ll pay for the wine.”

“ What wine ? ”

“ The Argenteuil.”

“ Where is it ? ”

“ At the Bon Coing ! ”

“ Go to the deuce ! ” said the grave-digger.

And he threw a spadeful of earth on the coffin, which produced a hollow sound. Fauchelevent tottered, and was himself ready to fall into the grave. He cried, in a voice with which a death-rattle was beginning to be mingled,—

“ Come along, mate, before the Bon Coing closes.”

The grave-digger filled his spade again, and Fauchelevent continued, “ I’ll pay.”

And he seized the grave-digger’s arm.

“ Listen to me, mate ; I am the convent grave-digger, and have come to help you. It is a job which can be done by night, so let us begin by going to have a drain.”

And while speaking, while clinging to this desperate pressing, he made the melancholy reflection, “ And suppose he does drink, will he get drunk ? ”

“ Provincial,” said the grave-digger, “ since you are

so pressing, I consent. We will drink, but after work, not before."

And he raised his spade, but Fauchelevent restrained him.

"It is Argenteuil wine."

"Why," said the grave-digger, "you must be a bell-ringer; ding dong, ding dong. You can only say that. Go and have yourself pulled."

And he threw the second shovelful. Fauchelevent had reached that moment when a man is no longer aware of what he says.

"But come and drink," he cried, "since I offer to pay."

"When we have put the child to bed," said Gribier.

He threw the third spadeful, and then added as he dug the shovel into the ground,—

"It will be very cold to-night! and the dead woman would hallo after us if we were to leave her here without a blanket."

At this moment the grave-digger stooped to fill his spade, and his jacket pocket gaped. Fauchelevent's wandering glance fell mechanically into his pocket and remained there. The sun was not yet hidden by the horizon, and there was still sufficient light to distinguish something white at the bottom of this gaping pocket.

All the brightness of which a Picard peasant's eye is capable glistened in Fauchelevent's—an idea had struck him. Unnoticed by the grave-digger, he thrust his hand into his pocket from behind, and drew out the white thing at the bottom. The grave-digger threw the fourth shovelful into the grave, and as he hurried to raise a fifth, Fauchelevent looked at him with a profound calmness, and said,—

"By the way, my novice, have you your card?"

"What card?"

"The sun is just going to set."

"Very good, it can put on its night-cap."

"The cemetery gates will be shut."

"Well, and what then?"

"Have you your card?"



"Ah, my card!" the grave-digger said: and he felt in one pocket and then in another, he passed to his fobs and turned them inside out.

"No," he said, "I have not got my card, I must have forgotten it."

"Fifteen francs fine," said Fauchelevent.

The grave-digger turned green, for the pallor of livid men is green.

"Oh Lord, have mercy upon me," he exclaimed; "fifteen francs fine!"

"Three one hundred sous pieces," said Fauchelevent.

The grave-digger let his shovel fall, and Fauchelevent's turn had arrived.

"Come, conscript," said the old gardener, "no despair; you need not take advantage of the grave to commit suicide. Fifteen francs are fifteen francs, and, besides, you can avoid paying them. I am old and you a newcomer, and I am up to all the tricks and dodges. I will give you a piece of friendly advice. One thing is clear, the sun is setting, it is touching the dome, and the cemetery will shut in five minutes."

"That is true."

"Five minutes will not be enough for you to fill up this grave, which is deuced deep, and reach the gates in time to get out before they close."

"Perfectly correct."

"In that case, fifteen francs fine. But you have time—where do you live?"

"Hardly a quarter of an hour's walk from here, at No. 87 Rue de Vaugirard."

"You have just time enough to get out, if you look sharp."

"So I have."

"Once outside the gates, you will gallop home and fetch your card, and when you return the porter will open the gate for you gratis. And you will bury your dead woman, whom I will stop from running away during your absence."

"I owe you my life, peasant."

"Be off at once," said Fauchelevent.

The grave-digger, who was beside himself with gratitude, shook his hand and ran off.

When he had disappeared behind a clump of trees, Fauchelevent listened till his footsteps died away, then bent over the grave, and said in a low voice, "Father Madeleine!"

There was no reply. Fauchelevent trembled: he tumbled all of a heap into the grave, threw himself on the coffin-lid, and cried,—

"Are you there?"

There was silence in the coffin, and Fauchelevent, who could not breathe for trembling, took out his cold chisel and hammered and prized off the coffin-lid. He could see Jean Valjean's face in the gloom, pale, and with the eyes closed. The gardener's hair stood on an end; he got up, and then fell against the side of the grave. He gazed at Jean Valjean, who lay livid and motionless. Fauchelevent murmured in a voice faint as a breath, "He is dead!"

And drawing himself up, he folded his arms so violently that his clenched fists struck his shoulders, and cried, "That is the way in which I save him!"

Then the poor old man began sobbing and soliloquizing, for it is a mistake to suppose that there is no soliloquy in nature. Powerful agitations often talk aloud.

"It is Father Mestienne's fault. Why did that ass die? Had he any occasion to go off the hooks so unexpectedly? It is he who has killed Monsieur Madeleine. Father Madeleine! he is in his coffin, and it is all over with him. Has such a thing as this any common sense? Oh my goodness, he is dead! Well, and what shall I do with his little girl? What will the greengrocer say? Is it possible that such a man can die in such a way? When I think how he got under my cart! Father Madeleine! Father Madeleine! By heaven, he is suffocated, as I said he would be, and he would not believe me. Well! this is a pretty trick of my performance. The worthy man is dead, the best man among all God's good people!

and his little one ! Well, I shan't go back to the convent, but stop here. To have done such a thing as this ! It is not worth while being two old men to be two old fools. But how did he manage to get into the convent ? That was the beginning, and a man ought not to do things like that. Father Madeleine, Madeleine, Monsieur Madeleine, Monsieur le Maire ! He does not hear me. Get out of it now as best you can."

And he tore his hair. A shrill, grating sound was audible at a distance through the trees : it was the closing of the cemetery gate. Fauchelevent bent over Jean Valjean, and all at once bounded back to the further end of the grave—Jean Valjean's eyes were open and staring at him.

If seeing a death is fearful, seeing a resurrection is nearly as frightful. Fauchelevent became like stone. He was pale, haggard, confounded by such excessive emotion, not knowing if he had to do with a dead man or a living man, and looking at Jean Valjean, who looked at him.

"I was falling asleep," said Valjean.

And he sat up. Fauchelevent fell on his knees.

"Holy Virgin ! how you frightened me !"

Then he rose and cried, "Thank you, Father Madeleine !"

Jean Valjean had only fainted, and the fresh air aroused him again. Joy is the reflux of terror, and Fauchelevent had almost as much difficulty in recovering himself as had Jean Valjean.

"Then you are not dead ! Oh, what a clever fellow you are ! I called to you so repeatedly that you came back. When I saw your eyes closed, I said, 'There, he is suffocated !' I should have gone stark mad, fit for a strait waistcoat, and they would have put me in Bicêtre. What would you have me do if you were dead ? And your little girl ? the greengrocer's wife would not have understood it at all. A child is left upon her hands, and the grandfather is dead ! What a story ! oh, my good saints in Paradise, what a story ! Well, you are alive, that's the great thing."

"I am cold," said Valjean.

This remark completely recalled Fauchelevant to the reality, which was urgent. These two men, who had scarce recovered, had a troubled mind, they knew not why, which emanated from the gloomy place where they were.

"Let us get out of this at once," said Fauchelevant.

He felt in his pocket and produced a flask.

"But a dram first," he said.

The flask completed what the fresh air had begun. Valjean drank a mouthful of spirits and regained perfect possession of himself. He got out of the coffin, and helped Fauchelevant to nail on the lid again: three minutes later they were out of the grave.

Fauchelevant was calm, and took his time. The cemetery was closed, and there was no fear of Gribier returning. That conscript was at home, busily seeking his card, and prevented from finding it because it was in Fauchelevant's pocket. Without it he could not return to the cemetery. Fauchelevant took the spade, and Valjean the pick, and they together buried the empty coffin. When the grave was filled up, Fauchelevant said,—

"Come along; you carry the pick and I will carry the spade."

Jean Valjean felt some difficulty in moving and walking, for in the coffin he had grown stiff, and become to some extent a corpse. The rigidity of death had seized upon him between these four planks, and he must, so to speak, become thawed.

"You are stiff," said Fauchelevant; "it is a pity that I am a cripple, or we would have a run."

"Nonsense," said Valjean, "half a dozen strides will make my legs all right again."

They went along the avenues by which the hearse had passed, and, on reaching the gate, Fauchelevant threw the grave-digger's card into the box; the porter pulled the string, and they went out.

"How famously it has all gone," said Fauchelevant; "it was an excellent idea you had, Father Madeleine!"

They passed through the Vaugirard barrier in the simplest way in the world, for, in the vicinity of a cemetery,

a spade and a pick are two passports. The Rue de Vaugirard was deserted.

"Father Madeleine," Fauchelevent said, as they walked along, "you have better eyes than I have, so show me No. 87."

"Here it is," said Valjean.

"There is no one in the street," Fauchelevent continued, "give me the pick, and wait for me a couple of minutes."

Fauchelevent entered No. 87, went right to the top, guided by that instinct which ever leads the poor man to the garret, and rapped at a door in the darkness. A voice replied, "Come in." It was Gribier's voice.

Fauchelevent pushed the door. The grave-digger's room was, like all these wretched abodes, an impoverished and crowded garret. A packing case—possibly a coffin—occupied the place of a chest of drawers, a butter-jar was the water-cistern, a palliasse represented the bed, while the floor filled the place of chairs and table. In one corner, on an old, ragged piece of carpet, were a thin woman and a heap of children. The whole of this poor interior displayed signs of a convulsion, and it seemed as if an earthquake had taken place there. The blankets were torn away, the rags scattered about, the jug was broken, the mother had been crying, and the children probably beaten—there were evident signs of an obstinate and savage search. It was plain that the grave-digger had been wildly looking for his card, and made everything in the garret responsible for it, from his jug to his wife. He looked desperate, but Fauchelevent was too eager to notice this sad side of his success; he went in, and said, "I have brought you your spade and pick."

Gribier looked at him in stupefaction.

"Is it you, peasant?"

"And to-morrow morning you will find your card with the porter of the cemetery."

And he placed the shovel and pick on the ground.

"What does this mean?" Gribier asked.

"It means that you let your card fall out of your

pocket, that I found it on the ground when you had left, that I have buried the dead woman, filled up the grave, done your work, the porter will give you your card, and you will not pay fifteen francs. That's what it is, conscript!"

"Thanks, villager," said Gribier, quite dazzled, "next time I will pay for a bottle."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A SUCCESSFUL EXAMINATION.

AN hour later two men and a child presented themselves in the darkness of night at No. 69 Little Rue Picpus. The elder of the two men raised the knocker and rapped.

The two men had fetched Cosette from the greengrocer's, where Fauchelevent had left her on the previous evening. Cosette had spent the four-and-twenty hours in understanding nothing, and silently trembling; she trembled so greatly that she had not cried, nor had she eaten or slept. The worthy greengrocer had asked her a hundred questions, but had only obtained as answer a gloomy look, ever the same. Cosette did not breathe a syllable of what she had seen or heard during the last two days, for she guessed that she was passing through a crisis, and felt deeply that she must be "good." Who has not experienced the sovereign power of the words, "say nothing," uttered with a certain accent in the ear of a little, startled being? Fear is dumb; besides, no one can keep a secret like a child.

The only thing was, that when she saw Jean Valjean again after these mournful four-and-twenty hours, she uttered such a cry of joy, that any thoughtful person who had heard it would have divined in this cry an escape from a gulf.

Fauchelevent belonged to the convent, and knew all the passwords; hence doors readily opened to him, and thus was solved the double and startling problem, "how to get in, and how to get out." The porter, who had his

instructions, opened the little gate which communicated between the courtyard and the garden, in the wall of the former facing the gateway, which might still be seen from the street twenty years ago. The porter showed them all three through this gate, and thence they reached the inner private parlour where Fauchelevent had received the orders of the prioress on the previous day.

The prioress was waiting for them, rosary in hand, and a vocal mother, with her veil down, was standing near her. A discreet candle lit up, or, to speak more correctly, pretended to light up the parlour. The prioress took a thorough look at Jean Valjean, for no eye examines like a drooping one. Then she questioned him.

"Are you the brother?"

"Yes, Reverend Mother," Fauchelevent answered.

"What is your name?"

Fauchelevent answered: "Ultime Fauchelevent."

He had really had a brother of that name, who was dead.

"Where do you come from?"

*Fauchelevent.* "From Picquigny near Amiens."

"What is your age?"

*F.* "Fifty."

"What is your trade?"

*F.* "Gardener."

"Are you a good Christian?"

*F.* "All the members of our family are so."

"Is this little girl yours?"

*F.* "Yes, Reverend Mother."

"Are you her father?"

*F.* "Her grandfather."

The vocal mother said to the prioress in a whisper, "He answers well."

Jean Valjean had not said a word. The prioress looked attentively at Cosette, and whispered to the vocal mother, "She will be ugly."

The two mothers consulted for a few minutes in a very low voice in a corner of the parlour, and then the prioress turned and said,—

"Father Fauvent, you will get another knee-cap and bell, for we shall require two in future."

On the morrow two bells were really heard in the garden, and the nuns could not resist the temptation of raising a corner of their veils. They could see under the shade of the trees two men digging side by side, Fauvent and another. It was an enormous event, and silence was so far broken that they whispered, "It is an assistant gardener," while the vocal mothers added, "It is a brother of Father Fauvent's."

Jean Valjean was in fact permanently installed; he had the leathern knee-cap and bell, and was henceforth official. He called himself *Ultime Fauchelevent*. The most powerful determining cause of his admission was the remark of the prioress with reference to Cosette—*she will be ugly*. The prioress, once she had prognosticated this, felt an affection for Cosette, and gave her a place in the boarding-school. This is very logical after all; for, although there may be no looking-glasses in a convent, women are conscious of their face. Now, girls who feel themselves pretty have a disinclination to take the veil, and as inclination to the calling is generally in an inverse ratio to beauty, more is hoped from ugly than from pretty girls.

All this adventure aggrandized Fauchelevent, for he had a threefold success—with Jean Valjean, whom he saved and sheltered; with Gribier, who said to himself, He saved me fifteen francs; and with the convent, which, thanks to him, by keeping the coffin of Mother Crucifixion under the altar, eluded Cæsar and glorified God. There was a coffin with a body at the Little Picpus, and a coffin without a body in the Vaugirard cemetery; public order was doubtless deeply affected by this, but did not perceive the fact. As for the convent, its gratitude to Fauchelevent was great; he became the best of servants, and most precious of gardeners. On the archbishop's very next visit the prioress told the whole affair to the Grandeur, partly in confusion, and partly in a boastful spirit. The archbishop, on leaving the convent,



spoke about it, applaudingly and in a whisper, to M. de Latil, confessor to Monseigneur, and afterwards Archbishop of Reims and Cardinal. The admiration felt for Fauchelevent travelled all the way to Rome, and we have seen a letter addressed by the then reigning Pope, Leo XII., to one of his relatives, Monsignore, in the Paris Nunciature, and called, like himself, Della Genga, in which were the following lines: "It appears that there is at a convent in Paris an excellent gardener, who is a holy man, of the name of Fauvan." Nothing of all this triumph reached Fauchelevent in his hut; he went on grafting, hoeing, and covering his melon beds, quite unaware of his excellence and sanctity. He no more suspected his glory than does a Durham or Surrey steer whose protrait is published in the *Illustrated London News*, with the inscription "The ox that gained the shorthorn prize."

---

## CHAPTER IX.

IN THE CONVENT.<sup>o</sup>

COSETTE in the convent continued to be silent. She naturally thought herself Valjean's daughter, but as she knew nothing, she could say nothing, and in any case would have said nothing, as we have remarked: for nothing trains children to silence like misfortune. Cosette had suffered so greatly that she feared everything, even to speak, even to breathe, for a word had so often brought down an avalanche upon her! She had scarce begun to grow reassured since she had belonged to Jean Valjean, but she grew very soon accustomed to the convent. The only thing she regretted was Catherine, but she did not dare say so; one day, however, she remarked to Valjean, "If I had known, I would have brought her with me."

Cosette, on becoming a boarder at the convent, was obliged to assume the garb of the pupils of the house. Jean Valjean begged, and obtained the old clothes she left off; the same mourning clothes he made her put

on when he removed her from the Thénardiens', and they were not much worn. Jean Valjean placed these clothes and her shoes and stockings, with a quantity of camphor and other odorous drugs with which convents abound, in a small valise which he managed to procure. He placed this valise on a chair by his bedside, and always had the key about him.

"Father," Cosette asked him one day, "what is that box which smells so nice?"

Father Fauchelevent, in addition to the glory we have described and of which he was ignorant, was rewarded for his good deed; in the first place, he was happy, and, in the second place, he had much less to do, owing to the division of labour. Lastly, as he was very fond of snuff, he had from M. Madeleine's presence the advantage that he took thrice as much as before, and in a far more voluptuous manner, because M. Madeleine paid for it.

The nuns did not adopt the name of *Ultime*; they called Jean Valjean "the other Fauvent." Had these holy women had any of Javert's temper about them, they must have noticed that when anything had to be procured from outside for the garden it was always the elder Fauvent, the cripple, who went out, and never the other; but either because eyes constantly fixed on God know not how to spy, or because they preferred to watch one another, they paid no attention to the fact. However, Jean Valjean did quite right in keeping shy and not stirring, for Javert watched the quarter for a whole month.

This convent was to Jean Valjean like an island surrounded by gulfs, and these four walls were henceforth the world for him; he saw enough of the sky there to be secure, and enough of Cosette to be happy. He lived with old Fauchelevent in the hovel at the end of the garden. This lath and plaster tenement, which still existed in 1825, was composed of three rooms which had only the bare walls. The largest room was surrendered by force, for Jean Valjean resisted in vain, by Father Fauchelevent to M. Madeleine. The wall of this

room had for ornament, in addition to the two nails for hanging up the knee-cap and the basket, a Royalist note for ten livres, date '93, fastened above the mantelpiece.

Jean Valjean worked daily in the garden, and was very useful.

Cosette had permission to spend an hour daily with him, and as the sisters were sad and he was kind, the child compared them and adored him. At the fixed hour she ran to the cottage, and when she entered it filled it with paradise. Jean Valjean expanded, and felt his own happiness grow with the happiness which he caused Cosette. The joy which we inspire has this charming thing about it, that far from being weakened, like ordinary reflections, it returns to us more radiant than before. In her hours of recreation Jean Valjean watched her from a distance, and distinguished her laugh from that of the others, for Cosette now laughed. Her face had also changed to a certain extent, for laughter is the sun which drives winter from the human face. When Cosette returned to her studies Jean Valjean watched the windows of her schoolroom.

All that surrounded him—this peaceful garden, these fragrant flowers, these children uttering merry cries, these grave and simple women, these silent cloisters—slowly penetrated him, and gradually his soul was composed of silence like this cloister, of perfume like these flowers, of peace like this garden, of simplicity like these women, and of joy like these children. And then he thought how two houses of GOD had in turn received him at the two critical moments of his life, the first when all doors were closed and human society repulsed him, the second at the moment when human society was beginning to hunt him down again, and the hulks were yawning for him; and that, had it not been for the former, he would have fallen back into crime, and but for the latter, into punishment. All his heart melted into gratitude, and he loved more and more.

Several years passed thus, and Cosette grew.

## PART III.—MARIUS.



## BOOK I.

### CHAPTER I.

#### PARVULUS.

PARIS has a child and the forest has a bird ; the bird is called a sparrow, the child is called a gamin. Couple these two ideas, the one which is all furnace, the other all dawn ; bring the two sparks, Paris and childhood, into collision, and a little being is produced, a *homuncio*, as Plautus would say.

This little being is joyous ; he does not eat every day, and he goes to the theatre every night if he thinks proper. He has no shirt on his body, no shoes on his feet, and no covering on his head ; he is like the flies, which have none of those things. He is from seven to thirteen years of age, lives gregariously, lodges in the open air, wears an old pair of his father's trousers, which descend lower than his heels, an old hat belonging to some other father, which comes below his ears, and one yellow list brace. He runs, watches, begs, kills time, colours pipes, swears like a fiend, haunts the wine-shop, knows thieves, is intimate with prostitutes, talks slang, sings filthy songs, and has nothing bad in his heart ; for he has in his soul a pearl, Innocence ; and pearls are not dissolved by mud. So long as the man is a child, GOD desires that he should be innocent. If we were to ask the enormous city, " What is this creature ? " it would reply, " It is my little one."

The gamin of Paris is the dwarf of the giantess. Let us not exaggerate; this cherub of the gutter has sometimes a shirt, but in that case has only one; he has shoes at times, but then they have no soles; he has at times a home, and likes it, for he finds his mother there; but he prefers the street, because he finds liberty there. He has games of his own, and his own tricks, of which hatred of the respectable class constitutes the basis, and he has metaphors of his own—thus, to be dead, he calls eating dandelions by the root. He has trades of his own, fetching hackney coaches, letting down steps, pulling a board across the gutters in heavy showers, and shouting out speeches made by the authorities in favour of the French people. He has also a currency of his own, composed of all the little pieces of copper that can be picked up in the streets. This curious money, which takes the name of *loques*, has an unvarying and well-established value in this childish Bohemia.

Lastly, he has a fauna of his own, which he studiously observes in every hole and corner—the ladybird, the death's head moth, the daddy long-legs and the "devil," a black insect which threatens by writhing its tail, and which is armed with two horns. He has his fabulous monster, which has scales on its belly, and is not a lizard, and spots on its back, but is not a frog; it lives in holes in old limekilns and dried-up wells; it is black, hairy, slimy, and crawls about, at one moment slowly, at another quickly; it utters no sound, but looks so terrible that no one has ever seen it. This monster he calls the "dragon," and looking for it under stones is a pleasure of a formidable nature. Another pleasure is suddenly to raise a paving-stone and look at the wood-lice. Every region of Paris is interesting for the celebrated "finds" which may be made in them; thus, there are earwigs in the timber-yards of the Ursulines, centipedes at the Pantheon, and tadpoles in the ditches of the Champs de Mars.

At night, thanks to a few halfpence which he always contrives to procure, the homuncio enters a theatre.

On crossing this magical threshold he becomes transfigured; he was a gamin, and he becomes the *titi*. Theatres are like overturned vessels, which have their keel in the air, and the *titis* congregate in the hold. The *titi* is to the gamin as the butterfly to the chrysalis, —the same being, but now flying and hovering. It is sufficient for him to be present, with his radiant happiness, his power of enthusiasm and delight, and the clapping of his hands, which resembles the flapping of wings—and the narrow, fetid, obscure, dirty, unhealthy, hideous, abominable hold is at once called Paradise.

## CHAPTER II.

## LITTLE GAVROCHE.

EIGHT or nine years after the events recorded in the second portion of this story, there might be noticed on the Boulevard du Temple and in the regions of the Château d'Eau, a boy of about eleven or twelve years of age, who would have tolerably well realized the ideal of a gamin as sketched above, had he not had, with the smile of his age on his lips, a heart absolutely gloomy and void. This child was dressed in a man's trousers, but he had not got them from his father, and a woman's jacket, which did not come from his mother. Some persons had clothed him in rags out of charity. Yet he had a father and a mother, but his father did not think of him, and his mother did not love him. He was one of those children worthy of pity before all, who have father and mother and are orphans.

This child was never so comfortable anywhere as in the street, for the paving-stones were less hard to him than his mother's heart. His parents had kicked him out into life, and he had simply tried his wings. He was a noisy, pale, active, sharp, impudent lad, with a cunning and sickly look. He came and went, sang, played at



hopscotch, searched the gutters, pilfered a little, but gaily, like cats and sparrows, laughed when he was called a scamp, and felt angry when called a thief. He had no bed, no bread, no fire, no love: but he was happy because he was free. When these poor beings are men, the mill of social order nearly always crushes them, but so long as they are children they escape because they are small. The slightest hole saves them.

Still, so abandoned as this child was, it happened every two or three months that he said: "Well, I'll go and see mamma." Then he quitted the Boulevard, the Circus, the Porte St. Martin, went along the quay, crossed the bridge, reached the Salpêtrière, and arrived where? Exactly at the double No. 50-52, which the reader knows, the Maison Gorbeau. At this period No. 50-52, which was habitually deserted and eternally decorated with a bill of "Lodgings to Let," was, strange to say, inhabited by several persons, who had no acquaintance with each other, as is always the case in Paris. All belonged to that indigent class, which begins with the last small tradesman in difficulties, and is prolonged from wretchedness to wretchedness to those two beings to whom all the material things of civilization descend, the scavenger and the rag-picker.

The chief lodger of Jean Valjean's day was dead, and her place had been taken by another exactly like her. I forget now what philosopher said, "There is never any want of old women." This new old woman was called Madame Burgon, and had nothing remarkable in her life save a dynasty of three parrots, which had successively reigned over her soul. The most wretched of all the persons inhabiting the house were a family of four persons, father, mother, and two nearly grown-up daughters, all four living in the same attic, one of the cells to which we have alluded.

This family offered at the first glance nothing very peculiar beyond its denudation; and the father, on hiring the room, stated that his name was Jondrette. A short time after his moving in, which had borne a

striking resemblance—to employ the memorable remark of the chief lodger—to the coming in of nothing at all, this Jondrette had said to the woman, who, like her predecessor, was also portress and swept the stairs, “Mother So-and-So, if any one were to ask by chance for a Pole, or an Italian, or perhaps a Spaniard, I am the party.”

This was the family of the merry little vagabond. He joined it, and found distress, and, what is sadder still, not a smile; a cold hearth and cold heart. When he entered, they asked him, “Where do you come from?” and he answered, “From the street:” when he went away, “Where are you going?” and he answered, “To the street.” His mother would say to him, “What do you want here?” The boy lived in this absence of affection like the pale grass which grows in cellars. He was not hurt by it being so, and was not angry with any one: he did not know exactly how a father and mother ought to be. Moreover, his mother loved his sisters.

We have forgotten to mention that on the Boulevard the lad was called little Gavroche. Why was he called Gavroche? probably because his father’s name was Jondrette. Breaking the thread seems the instinct of some wretched families. The room which the Jondrettes occupied at the Maison Gorbeau was the last in the passage, and the cell next to it was occupied by a very poor young man of the name of Monsieur Marius. Let us state who this Monsieur Marius was.

## BOOK II. 6

### CHAPTER I.

#### NINETY YEARS AND TWO-AND-THIRTY TEETH.

THERE are still a few persons residing in the Rue Boucherat, Rue de Normandie, and Rue de Saintonge, who can remember a gentleman of the name of M. Gillenormand, and speak kindly about him. This man was old when they were young, and this profile has not entirely disappeared, with those who look sadly at the vague congregation of shadows called the past, from the labyrinth of streets near the Temple, which in the reign of Louis XIV. received the names of all the provinces of France, exactly in the same way as in our time the names of all the capitals of Europe have been given to the streets in the new Tivoli quarter ; a progression, by-the-bye, in which progress is visible.

M. Gillenormand, who was most lively in 1831, was one of those men who have become curious to look on, solely because they have lived a long time, and are strange, because they once resembled everybody and now no longer resemble any one. He was a peculiar old man, and most certainly the man of another age, the complete and rather haughty bourgeois of the eighteenth century, who carried his honest old bourgeoisie with the same air as marquises did their marquisate. He had passed his ninetieth year, walked upright, talked loudly,

saw clearly, drank heartily, and ate, slept, and snored. He still had his two-and-thirty teeth, and only wore spectacles to read with. He was of an amorous temper, but said that for the last ten years he had decidedly and entirely given up the sex. "He could not please," he said: and he did not add, "I am too old," "but I am too poor. If I were not ruined—he, he, he!" In fact, all that was left him was an income of about fifteen thousand francs. His dream was to make a large inheritance, and have one hundred thousand francs a year, in order to keep mistresses. As we see, he did not belong to that weak variety of octogenarians, who, like M. de Voltaire, were dying all their life; his longevity was not that of the cracked jug, and this jolly old gentleman had constantly enjoyed good health. He was superficial, rapidly and easily angered, and he would storm at the slightest thing, most usually an absurd trifle. When he was contradicted, he raised his cane, and thrashed his people, as folk used to do in the great age. He had a daughter, upwards of fifty years of age and unmarried, whom he gave a hearty thrashing to when he was in a passion, and whom he would have liked to whip, for he fancied her eight years of age. He boxed his servant's ears energetically, and would say, "Ah, carrion!" One of his oaths was, "By the slipper of the slipperdom!" His tranquillity was curious; he was shaved every morning by a barber who had been mad, and who detested him, for he was jealous of M. Gillenormand on account of his wife, who was a pretty little coquette. M. Gillenormand admired his own discernment in everything, and declared himself extremely sagacious. The words he employed most frequently were "the sensitive man" and "nature," but he did not give to the latter word the vast acceptance of our age. But there was a certain amount of homeliness in his satirical remarks. "Nature," he would say, "anxious that civilization may have a little of everything, even gives it specimens of amusing barbarism. Europe has specimens of Asia and Africa, in a reduced size; the cat

is a drawing-room tiger, the lizard<sup>o</sup> & pocket crocodile. The ballet girls at the opera are pink savagesses ; they do not eat men, but they live on them : the little magicians change them into oysters and swallow them. The Caribs only leave the bones, and they only leave the shells. Such are our manners ; we do not devour, but we nibble ; we do not exterminate, but we scratch."

He lived in the Marais, at No. 6 Rue des Filles du Calvaire, and the house belonged to him. This house has since been pulled down and rebuilt, and the number has probably been changed in the numbering revolutions which the streets of Paris undergo. He occupied an old and vast suite of rooms on the first floor, furnished up to the ceiling with large Gobelins and Beauvais tapestry, representing shepherd scenes ; the subjects of the ceiling and panels were repeated in miniature upon the chairs. He surrounded his bed with an immense screen of Coromandel lacquer work ; long curtains hung from the windows, and made very splendid, large, broken folds. The garden immediately under the windows was reached by a flight of twelve or fifteen steps running from one of them, which the old gentleman went up and down very nimbly. In addition to the library adjoining his bedroom, he had a boudoir, which he was very fond of, a gallant withdrawing-room, hung with a magnificent fleur-de-lisé tapestry, made in the galleys of Louis XIV., which M. de Vivonne had ordered of his convicts for his mistress. M. Gillenormand inherited this from a stern maternal great-aunt, who died at the age of one hundred. He had had two wives. His manners were midway between those of a courtier, which he had never been, and of the barrister, which he might have been. He was gay and pleasing when he liked ; in his youth he had been one of those men who are always deceived by their wives and never by their mistresses, because they are at once the most disagreeable husbands and the most charming lovers imaginable. He was a connoisseur of pictures, and had in his bedroom a marvellous picture of somebody unknown, painted by Jordaens in a bold style, and with an infinitude of details.

M. Gillenormand's coat was not in the style of Louis XV. or even Louis XVI., but it was in the style of the Incrédibles of the Directory. He had believed himself quite a youth at that time, and followed the fashions. His coat was of light cloth with large cuffs, he wore a long swallow-tail, and large steel buttons. Add to these, knee-breeches and buckle-shoes. He always had his hands in his fobs, and said authoritatively, "The French Revolution is a collection of ragamuffins."

## CHAPTER II.

## CENTENARIAN ASPIRATIONS.

At the age of sixteen, when at the opera one night, he had the honour of being examined simultaneously by two beauties, at that time celebrated and sung by Voltaire, La Camargo and La Salle. Caught between two fires, he beat an heroic retreat upon a little dancing-girl of the name of Naheury, sixteen years of age, like himself, obscure as a cat, of whom he was enamoured. He abounded in recollections, and would exclaim, "How pretty that Guimard-Guimardini-Guimardinette was the last time I saw her at Longchamps, with her hair dressed in 'sustained feelings,' her 'come and see them' of turquoises, her dress of the colour of 'newly-arrived people,' and her muff of 'agitation.'" He had worn in his youth a jacket of Nain-Londeur, to which he was fond of alluding: "I was dressed like a Turk of the Levantine Levant." Madame Boufflers, seeing him accidentally when he was twenty years of age, declared him to be "a charming madcap." He was scandalized at all the names he saw in politics and power, and considered them low and bourgeois. He read the journals, the *newspapers*, the *gazettes*, as he called them, and burst into a laugh. "Oh!" he would say, "who are these people? Corbière! Humann! Casimir Perrier! there's a ministry for you! I

can imagine this in a paper, M. Gillenormand, Minister ; it would be a farce, but they are so stupid that it might easily happen." He lightly called everything by its proper or improper name, and was not checked by the presence of ladies ; and he uttered coarseness, obscenity, and filth, with a peculiarly calm and slightly amazed accent, in which was elegance. That was the indifference of his age, for we may draw attention to the fact that the season of paraphrases in verse was that of crudities in prose. His grandfather had predicted that he would be a man of genius, and gave him the two significant Christian names, Luc Esprit.

### CHAPTER III.

#### BASQUE AND NICOLETTE.

HE had his theories ; here is one of them. " When a man passionately loves women, and himself has a wife for whom he cares little, for she is ugly, legitimate, full of her rights, reliant on the code, and jealous when she likes to be so, he has only one way of getting out of the hobble and living at peace—it is to leave his purse-strings to his wife. This abdication renders him free ; the wife is henceforth occupied, grows passionately fond of handling specie, verdirises her fingers, undertakes to instruct the peasants and train the farmers, harangues the notaries, visits their offices, follows the course of law-suits, draws up leases, dictates contracts, feels herself queenly, sells, buys, regulates, orders, promises, and compromises, yields, concedes and recedes, arranges, deranges, saves and squanders ; she commits follies, which is a magisterial and personal happiness, and that consoles her. While her husband despises her, she has the satisfaction of ruining her husband." This theory M. Gillenormand applied to himself, and it became his history. His wife, the second one, managed his fortune in such a manner that one fine day when he found himself a widower, he had just enough to

live on, by buying an annuity, three-fourths of which would expire with him. He had not hesitated, for he did not care much about leaving anything to his heir, and, besides, he had seen that patrimonies had their adventures, and for instance, became "National Property;" he had seen the avatars of the three per cent. consols, and put but little faith in the great Book. "All that is Rue Quincampoix!" he would say. His house in the Rue des Filles du Calvaire belonged, as we stated, to him, and he had two servants, "a he and a she." When a servant came into his house M. Gillenormand rechristened him, and gave the men the name of their province, Nîmois, Comtois, Poitevin, or Picard. His last valet was a fat, cunning man of forty-five, incapable of running twenty yards, but as he was born at Bayonne, M. Gillenormand called him Basque. As for the maidservants, he called them all Nicolette (even La Magnon, to whom we shall allude directly). One day a proud cook, a Cordon Bleu, of the lofty porter race, presented herself. "What wages do you expect a month?" M. Gillenormand asked her. "Thirty francs." • "What is your name?" "Olympie." "I will give you forty, and call you Nicolette."

In Gillenormand sorrow was translated into passion; he was furious at being in despair. He had every prejudice and took every license. One of the things of which he composed his external relief and internal satisfaction was, as we have indicated, having remained a gay fellow, and passing energetically for such. He called this having a "royal renown," but this renown at times brought him into singular scrapes. One day a big baby, wrapped in rags and crying lustily, was brought to him in a basket, which a maidservant, discharged six months previously, attributed to him. M. Gillenormand was at that time past his eighty-fourth year, and people around him became indignant and clamorous. "Does the impudent wench expect to make anybody believe this? What audacity! what an abominable calumny!" M. Gillenormand, however, did not feel at all angry. He looked at the brat with the amiable smile of a man flattered by the



calumny, and said to the company, "Well, what is the matter? Is there anything so wonderful in it, that you should stand there like stuck pigs, and display your ignorance? M. le Duc d'Angoulême, bastard of his Majesty Charles IX., married at the age of eighty-five a girl of fifteen; Monsieur Virginal, Marquis d'Alleuze, and brother of Cardinal de Sourdis, Archbishop of Bordeaux, had at the age of eighty-three by the lady's maid of Madame Jacquin, the President's wife, a lovely boy, who was a Knight of Malta, and Member of the Privy Council. One of the great men of this age, Abbé Tabaraud, is the son of a man of eighty-seven years of age. These things are common enough; and then take the Bible! After this, I declare that this little gentleman is none of mine, but take care of him, for it is not his fault." The creature, the aforesaid Magnon, sent him a second parcel the next year, also a boy, and M. Gillenormand thought it time to capitulate. He sent the two brats to their mother, agreeing to pay eighty francs a month for their support, but on condition that the mother was not to begin again. He added, "I expect that the mother will treat them well, and I shall go and see them now and then," which he did.

## CHAPTER IV.

### TWO WHO DO NOT FORM A PAIR.

SUCH was M. Luc Esprit Gillenormand, who had not lost his hair, which was rather grey than white, and always wore it in dog's ears. Altogether he was venerable, and contained both the frivolity and grandeur of the eighteenth century. In 1814 and the early years of the Restoration, M. Gillenormand, who was still a youth—he was only seventy-four—resided in the Rue Sirvandoni, Faubourg St. Germain. He only retired to the Marais on leaving society, that is to say, long after his eightieth year, and on leaving the world he immured himself in his habits;

the chief one, and in that he was invariable, was to keep his door closed by day and receive nobody, no matter the nature of his business, till night. He dined at five, and then his door was thrown open; it was the fashion of his century, and he did not like to give it up. "Day is low," he would say, "and only deserves closed shutters." People of fashion light up their wit when the zenith illumines its stars, and he barricaded himself against everybody, even had it been the king—such was the fashion of his day.

As for M. Gillenormand's two daughters, they were born at an interval of ten years. In their youth they had been very little alike, and both in character and face were as little sisters as was possible. The younger was a charming creature, who turned to the light, loved flowers, poetry, and music, was enthusiastic, ethereal, and mentally betrothed from her youth up to some heroic figure. The elder had her chimera too; she saw in the azure a contractor, some fat and very rich man, a splendidly stupid husband, a million converted into a man, or else a prefect, the reception at the prefecture, an usher in the ante-room with a chain round his neck, the official balls, the addresses at the Mansion-house to be "Madame la Préfète"—all this buzzed in her imagination. The two sisters wandered each in her own reverie, at the period when they were girls, and both had wings, the one those of an angel, the other those of a goose.

No ambition is fully realized, at least not in this nether world, and no paradise becomes earthly in our age. The younger married the man of her dreams, but she was dead, while the elder did not marry. At the period when she enters into our narrative, she was an old virtue, an incombustible pride, with one of the most acute noses and most obtuse intellects imaginable. It is a characteristic fact that, beyond her family, no one had ever known her first name; she was called Mademoiselle Gillenormand the elder. In the matter of cant, Mademoiselle Gillenormand could have given points to a Miss, and she was modesty carried to the verge of immodesty. She had one fright-

ful reminiscence in her life—one day a man saw her garter.

She had a chapel friend, an old maid like herself, of the name of Mlle. Vaubois, absolutely imbecile, and by whose side Mlle. Gillenormand had the pleasure of being an eagle. Beyond Agnus Deis and Ave Marias, Mlle. Vaubois knew nothing except the different ways of making preserves. Perfect of her genius, she was the ermine of stupidity, without a single spot of intelligence. We must add that Mlle. Gillenormand rather gained than lost by growing old. She had never been wicked, which is a relative goodness ; and then years abrade angles. She had an obscure melancholy, of which she did not, herself, possess the secret, and about her entire person there was the stupor of a finished life which has not begun. She kept house for her father ; such families, consisting of an old man and an old maid, are not rare, and have the ever-touching appearance of two weaknesses supporting each other.

There was also in this house a child, a little boy, who was always trembling and dumb in the old gentleman's presence. M. Gillenormand never spoke to this boy except with a stern voice, and at times with upraised cane. "Come here, sir—scamp, scoundrel, come here—answer me, fellow—let me see you, vagabond !" etc., etc. He adored him ; it was his grandson, and we shall meet him again.

## BOOK III.

### CHAPTER I.

#### AN OLD DRAWING-ROOM.

WHEN M. Gillenormand lived in the Rue Sirvardoni, he frequented several very good and highly noble salons. Although a bourgeois, M. Gillenormand was welcome in them, and as he had a twofold stock of wit, namely, that which he had, and that attributed to him, he was sought after and made much of. There are some people who desire influence and to be talked about, no matter what price they pay ; and when they cannot be oracles, they make themselves buffoons. M. Gillenormand was not of that nature ; and his domination in the Royalist drawing-rooms which he frequented did not cost him any of his self-respect. He was an oracle everywhere, and at times he held his own against M. de Bonald, and even M. Bengy-Puy-Vallée.

About 1817, he invariably spent two afternoons a week at the house of the Baronne de T——, a worthy and respectable person, whose husband had been, under Louis XVI., Ambassador to Berlin. The Baron de T——, who, when alive, was passionately devoted to magnetic ecstasies and visions, died abroad a ruined man, leaving as his sole fortune ten MS. volumes bound in red morocco and gilt-edged, which contained very curious memoirs about Mesmer and his trough. Madame de T—— did not

publish these memoirs through dignity, and lived on a small annuity, which survived no one knew how. Madame de T—— lived away from Court, "which was a very mixed society," as she said, in noble, proud, and poor isolation. Some friends collected twice a week round her widow's fire, and this constituted a pure Royalist salon. Tea was drunk, and people uttered there, according as the wind blew to elegiacs or dithyrambics, groans or cries of horror, about the age, the charter, the Bonapartists, the prostitution of the Cordon Bleu to untitled persons, and the Jacobinism of Louis XVIII.; and they also whispered about the hopes which Monsieur, afterwards Charles X., produced.

Low songs, in which Napoleon was called Nicholas, were greeted here with transports of delight. Duchesses, the most charming and delicate of ladies, went into ecstasies there about couplets like the following, which were addressed to the "Federals :"

" Renforcez dans vos eulottes  
Le bout d'chemise qui vous pend.  
Qu'on n'dis pas qu'les patriotes  
Ont arboré l'drapeau blanc ! "

They amused themselves with puns which they fancied tremendous, with innocent jokes which they supposed venomous, with quatrains and even distichs.

As for M. Gillenormand, the respect felt for him was of perfectly good alloy. He was an authority; in spite of his levity, he had a certain imposing, worthy, honest, and haughty manner, which did not at all injure his gaiety, and his great age added to it. A man is not a century with impunity, and years eventually form a venerable fence around a head. He made remarks, too, which had all the sparkle of the old régime. Thus, when the King of Prussia, after restoring Louis XVIII., paid him a visit under the name of the Comte de Ruppin, he was received by the descendant of Louis XIV. somewhat as if he were a Marquis of Brandenburg, and with the most delicate impertinence. M. Gillenormand approved of it. "All

kings who are not King of France," he said, "are provincial kings." One day the following question was asked, and answer given in his presence, "What has been done about the Editor of the *Courrier Français*?" "He is to be changed." "There's a *o* too much," M. Gillenormand drily observed. At an anniversary Te Deum for the return of the Bourbons, on seeing M. de Talleyrand pass, he said, "There's his Excellency the Devil."

M. Gillenormand was generally accompanied by his daughter, a tall young lady, who at that time was forty and looked fifty; and by a pretty boy of nine years of age, red and white, fresh, with happy, confident eyes, who never appeared in this drawing-room without hearing all the voices buzz around him—"How pretty he is! what a pity, poor boy!" This lad was the one to whom we referred just now, and he was called "poor boy" because he had for father "a brigand of the Loire." This brigand was that son-in-law of M. Gillenormand, who has already been mentioned, and whom the old gentleman called the "disgrace of his family."

## CHAPTER II.

### A RED SPECTRE OF THAT DAY.

ANY one who had passed at that period through the little town of Vernon, and walked on the handsome stone bridge, which, let us hope, will soon be succeeded by some hideous wire bridge, would have noticed, on looking over the parapet, a man of about fifty, wearing a leathern cap, and trousers and jacket of coarse grey cloth, to which something yellow, which had been a red ribbon, was sewn, with a face tanned by the sun, and almost black, and hair almost white, with a large scar on his forehead, and running down his cheek, bowed and prematurely aged, walking almost every day, spade and pick in hand, in one of the

walled enclosures near the bridge, which border, like a belt of terraces, the left bank of the Seine. There are delicious enclosures full of flowers, of which you might say, were they much larger, "they are gardens," and if they were a little smaller, "they are bouquets." All these enclosures join the river at one end and a house at the other. The man in the jacket and wooden shoes, to whom we have alluded, occupied in 1817 the narrowest of these enclosures and the smallest of these houses. He lived there alone and solitary, silently and poorly, with a woman who was neither young nor old, neither pretty nor ugly, neither peasant nor bourgeoisie, who waited on him. The square of land which he called his garden was celebrated in the town for the beauty of the flowers he cultivated, and they were his occupation.

Through his toil, perseverance, attention, and watering-pot, he had succeeded in creating after the Creator; and he had invented sundry tulips and dahlias which seemed to have been forgotten by nature. He was ingenious, and preceded Soulange Bodin in the formation of small patches of peat-soil for the growth of rare and precious shrubs of America and China. From daybreak in summer he was in his walks, pricking out, clipping, hoeing, watering, or moving among his flowers, with an air of kindness, sorrow, and gentleness. At times he would stand thoughtful and motionless for hours, listening to the song of a bird in a tree, the prattle of a child in the house, or else gazing at a drop of dew on a blade of grass, which the sun converted into a carbuncle. He lived very poorly, and drank more milk than wine: a child made him give way, and his servant scolded him. He was timid to such an extent that he seemed stern, went out rarely, and saw no one but the poor, who tapped at his window, and his curé, Abbé Mabœuf, a good old man. Still, if the inhabitants of the town or strangers, curious to see his roses or tulips, came and tapped at his little door, he opened it with a smile. He was the brigand of the Loire.

**Any one who, at the same time, read military Memoirs**

and Biographies, the *Moniteur* and the bulletins of the great army, might have been struck by the name which pretty often turns up, that of George Pontmercy. When quite a lad this Pontmercy was a private in the Saintonge regiment, and when the Revolution broke out, this regiment formed part of the army of the Rhine, for the regiments of the Monarchy kept their provincial names even after the fall of the Monarchy, and were not brigaded till 1794. Pontmercy fought at Spire, Worms, Neustadt, Turkheim, Alzey, and at Mayence, where he was one of the two hundred who formed Houchard's rear-guard. He, with eleven others, held out against the corps of the Prince of Hesse behind the old rampart of Andernach, and did not fall back on the main body until the enemy's guns had opened a breach from the parapet to the talus. He was under Kleber at Marchiennes, and at the fight of Mont Palissel, where his arm was broken by a rifle-ball; then he went to the frontier of Italy, and was one of the thirty who defended the Col de Tenda with Joubert. Joubert was appointed adjutant-general, and Pontmercy sub-lieutenant; he was by Berthier's side in the middle of the canister on that day of Lodi which made Bonaparte say, "Berthier was gunner, trooper, and grenadier." He saw his old general Joubert fall at Novi at the moment when he was shouting, with uplifted sabre, "Forward!" Having embarked with his company on board a cutter, which sailed from Genoa to some little port of the coast, he fell into a wasps' nest of seven or eight English sail. The Genoese commandant wished to throw his guns into the sea, hide the soldiers in the hold, and pass like a merchant vessel, but Pontmercy had the tricolour flag hoisted at the peak, and proudly passed under the guns of the British frigates. Twenty leagues further on, his audacity increasing, he attacked and captured a large English transport conveying troops to Sicily, and so laden with men and horses that the vessel's deck was almost flush with the sea. In 1805 he belonged to Malher's division, which took Gunzburg from the Archduke Ferdinand.



and at Wettingen he caught in his arms, amid a shower of bullets, Colonel Maupilet, who was mortally wounded at the head of the 9th Dragoons. He distinguished himself at Austerlitz in that admirable march in columns of companies performed under the enemy's fire ; and when the Russian Imperial Horse Guards destroyed one of the battalions of the 4th line Infantry, Pontmercy was among those who took their revenge, and drew back these guards. For this the Emperor gave him the Cross. Pontmercy saw in turn Wurmser made prisoner at Mantua, Mélas at Alessandria, and Mack at Ulm, and he belonged to the eighth corps of the grand army which Mortier commanded, and which took Hamburg. Then he joined the 55th regiment of the line, which was the old regiment of Flanders ; at Eylau, he was in the cemetery where the heroic Captain Louis Hugo, uncle of the author of this book, withstood, with his company of eighty-three men, for two hours, the whole effort of the enemy's army. Pontmercy was one of the three who left this cemetery alive. He was at Friedland ; then he saw Moscow, the Beresina, Lutzen, Bautzen, Dresden, Wacha, Leipsic, and the defiles of Gelnhausen ; then at Montmercil, Château-Thierry, Craon, the banks of the Marne, the banks of the Aisne, and the formidable position of Laon. At Arnay le Duc, as captain, he sabred ten Cossacks, and saved not his general, but his corporal ; he was cut to pieces on this occasion, and seven-and-twenty splinters were taken out of his left arm alone. Eight days before the capitulation of Paris he exchanged with a comrade and entered the cavalry ; for he had what was called under the old régime a "double hand," that is to say, an equal aptitude in handling, as private, a sabre or musket, as officer, a squadron or a company. From this aptitude, improved by military education, special arms sprang, for instance, the dragoons, who are at once cavalry and infantry. He accompanied Napoleon to Elba, and at Waterloo was a Major of cuirassiers in Dubois' brigade. It was he who took the colours of the Limburg battalion, and himself threw them at the Emperor's feet. He was

covered with blood, for, on seizing the colours, he received a sabre cut across the face. The Emperor, who was pleased, cried out to him, "You are a Colonel, a Baron, and officer of the Legion of Honour!" Pontmercy answered, "Sire, I thank you on behalf of my widow." An hour later he fell into the ravine of Ohain. And now who was this George Pontmercy? He was the same brigand of the Loire.

We have already seen some portion of his history. After Waterloo, Pontmercy, drawn as we remember out of the hollow way of Ohain, succeeded in rejoining the army, and dragged himself from ambulance to ambulance as far as the cantonments of the Loire. The Restoration put him on half-pay, and then sent him to Vernon, under honourable surveillance. King Louis XVIII., regarding all that was done in the Hundred Days as if it had not happened, recognized neither his quality as officer of the Legion of Honour, nor his commission as Colonel, nor his title as Baron. He for his part neglected no opportunity to sign himself, "Colonel Baron de Pontmercy." He had only one old blue coat, and never went out without attaching to it the rosette of the Legion of Honour.

He had nothing but his scanty half-pay as Major, and he had taken the smallest house in Vernon, where he lived alone, in what way we have just seen. Under the Empire and between two wars he found time to marry Mademoiselle Gillenormand. The old bourgeois, who was indignant in his heart, concluded with a sigh and saying, "The greatest families are forced into it." In 1815, Madame Pontmercy, a most admirable woman in every respect, and worthy of her husband, died, leaving a child. This child would have been the Colonel's delight in his solitude, but the grandfather imperiously claimed him, declaring that if he were not given up to him he would disinherit him. The father yielded for the sake of the little one, and, unable to love his son, he took to loving flowers.

The inheritance of the grandfather was a small matter, but that of Mlle. Gillenormand the elder was considerable,

for this aunt was very rich on her mother's side, and her sister's son was her natural heir. 'The boy, who was called Marius, knew that he had a father, but nothing more, and no one opened his lips to him on the subject. Still, in the society to which his grandfather took him, the whisperings and winks eventually produced light in the boy's mind; he understood something at last, and, as he naturally accepted, by a species of infiltration and slow penetration, the ideas and opinions which were, so to speak, his breathing medium, he gradually came to think of his father only with shame.

While he was thus growing up in this way, the Colonel every two or three months came furtively to Paris, like a convict who is breaking his ban, and posted himself at St. Sulpice, at the hour when Aunt Gillenormand took Marius to Mass. Trembling lest the aunt should turn round, concealed behind a pillar, motionless, and scarce daring to breathe, he looked at this boy—the scarred warrior was frightened at this old maid.

From this very circumstance emanated his friendship with the Abbé Mabœuf, Curé of Vernon. This worthy priest had a brother, churchwarden of St. Sulpice, who had several times noticed this man contemplating his child, and the scar on his cheek, and the heavy tear in his eye. This man, who looked so thoroughly a man, and who wept like a child, struck the churchwarden, and this face adhered to his memory. One day when he went to Vernon to see his brother he met on the bridge Colonel Pontmercy, and recognized his man of St. Sulpice. The churchwarden told the affair to the Curé, and both made some excuse to pay a visit to the Colonel. This visit led to others, and the Colonel, though at first very close, eventually opened his heart, and the Curé and the churchwarden learnt the whole story, and how Pontmercy sacrificed his own happiness to the future of his child. The result was that the Curé felt a veneration and tenderness for him, and the Colonel, on his side, took the Curé into his affection. By the way, when both are equally sincere and good, no men amalgamate more

easily than an old priest and an old soldier, for they are the same men at the bottom. One devotes himself to his country down here, the other to his country up there ; that is the sole difference.

Twice a year, on January 1st, and St. George's day, Marius wrote his father letters dictated by his aunt, and which looked as if copied from a hand-book, for that was all M. Gillenormand tolerated ; and the father sent very affectionate replies, which the grandfather thrust into his pocket without reading.

### CHAPTER III.

#### REQUIESCANT !

THE salon of Madame de T—— was all that Marius Pontmercy knew of the world, and it was the sole opening by which he could look out into life. This opening was gloomy, and more cold than heat, more night than day, reached him through this trap. This boy, who was all joy and light on entering the strange world, became thus, in a short time, sad, and, what is more contrary still to his age, serious. "Surrounded by all these imposing and singular persons, he looked about him with serious astonishment, and all contributed to augment his stupor. There were in Madame de T——'s drawing-room old, noble, and very venerable ladies, who called themselves Mathau, Noé, Levis, pronounced Levi, and Cambis, pronounced Cambyse. These ancient faces and these Biblical names were mingled in the boy's mind with his Old Testament which he learnt by heart, and when they were all present, seated in a circle round an expiring fire, scarce illumined by a green shaded lamp, with their severe faces, their grey or white hair, their long dresses of another age, in which only mournful colours could be seen, and uttering at lengthened intervals words at once majestic and stern ; little Marius regarded them with wandering eyes

and fancied that he saw not women, but patriarchs, and Magi—not real beings, but ghosts.

It was this small high society which invented at the Tuileries the refinement of always speaking of the King in the third person, and never saying “Your Majesty,” as that qualification had been “sullied by the usurper.” Facts and men were judged there, and the age was ridiculed—which saved the trouble of comprehending it. They assisted one another in amazement, and communicated mutually the amount of enlightenment they possessed. Methusalem instructed Epimenides, and the deaf man put the blind man straight. The time which had elapsed since Coblenz was declared not to have passed, and in the same way as Louis XVIII. was *Dei gratia* in the twenty-fifth year of his reign, the *émigrés* were *de jure* in the twenty-fifth year of their adolescence.

Marius Pontmercy, like most children, received some sort of education. When he left the hands of Aunt Gillenormand, his grandfather intrusted him to a worthy professor of the finest classical innocence. This young mind, just expanding, passed from a prude to a pedant. Marius spent some years at college, and then joined the Law-school; he was royalist, fanatic, and austere. He loved but little his grandfather, whose gaiety and cynicism ruffled him, and he was gloomy as regarded his father. In other respects, he was an ardent yet cold, noble, generous, proud, religious, and exalted youth; worthy almost to harshness, and fierce almost to savageness.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE END OF THE BRIGAND.

THE conclusion of Marius's classical studies coincided with M. Gillenormand's retirement from society; the old gentleman bade farewell to the Faubourg St. Germain and Madame de T——'s drawing-room, and withdrew

to his house in the Marais. His servants were, in addition to the porter, that Nicolette who succeeded Magnon, and that wheezing, short-winded Easque, to whom we have already alluded. In 1827 Marius attained his seventeenth year; on coming home one evening he saw his grandfather holding a letter in his hand.

"Marius," said M. Gillenormand, "you will start to-morrow for Vernon."

"What for?" Marius asked.

"To see your father."

Marius trembled, for he had thought of everything excepting this, that he might one day be obliged to see his father. Nothing could be more unexpected, more surprising, and, let us add, more disagreeable for him. It was estrangement forced into intimacy, and it was not an annoyance so much as a drudgery. Marius, in addition to his motives of political antipathy, was convinced that his father, the trooper, as M. Gillenormand called him in his good-tempered days, did not love him; that was evident, as he had abandoned him thus and left him to others. Not feeling himself beloved, he did not love; and he said to himself that nothing could be more simple. He was so stupefied that he did not question his grandfather, but M. Gillenormand continued,—

"It seems that he is ill, and asks for you."

And after a silence he added,—

"Start to-morrow morning. I believe there is a coach which leaves at six o'clock and gets to Vernon at night-fall. Go by it, for he says that the matter presses."

Then he crumpled up the letter and put it in his pocket. Marius could have started the same night, and have been with his father the next morning; a diligence at that time used to run at night to Rouen, passing through Vernon. But neither M. Gillenormand nor Marius dreamed of inquiring. On the evening of the following day Marius arrived at Vernon, and asked the first passer-by for the house of "Monsieur Pontmercy." For in his mind he was of the same opinion as the Restoration, and did not recognize either his father's Barony

or Colonelcy. The house was shown him ; he rang, and a woman holding a small hand-lamp opened the door for him.

" Monsieur Pontmercy ? " Marius asked.

The woman stood motionless.

" Is this his house ? " Marius continued.

The woman shook her head in the affirmative.

" Can I speak to him ? "

The woman made a negative sign.

" Why, I am his son," Marius added ; " and he expects me."

" He no longer expects you," the woman said.

Then he noticed that she was crying ; she pointed to the door of a parlour, and he went in. In this room, which was lighted by a tallow candle placed on the mantelpiece, there were three men, one standing, one on his knees, and one lying full length upon the floor in his shirt. The one on the floor was the Colonel ; the other two were a physician and a priest praying. The Colonel had been attacked by brain fever three days before, and having a foreboding of evil, he wrote to M. Gillenormand, asking for his son. The illness grew worse, and on the evening of Marius's arrival at Vernon, the Colonel had an attack of delirium. He leaped out of bed, in spite of the maidservant, crying, " My son does not arrive, I will go to meet him." Then he left his bedroom, and fell on the floor of the anteroom—he had just expired. The physician and the Curé were sent for, but both arrived too late ; the son too had also arrived too late. By the twilight gleam of the candle, a heavy tear, which had fallen from the Colonel's dead eye, could be noticed on his pallid cheek. The eye was lustreless, but the tear had not dried up.

Marius gazed upon this dead man whom he saw for the first time and the last, upon this venerable and manly face, these open eyes which no longer saw, this white hair, and the robust limbs upon which could be distinguished here and there brown lines, which were sabre cuts, and red stars, which were bullet holes. He gazed at the

gigantic scar which imprinted heroism on this face, upon which God had imprinted gentleness. He thought that this man was his father, and that this man was dead, and he remained cold. The sorrow he felt was such as he would have felt in the presence of any other man whom he might have seen lying dead before him.

The Colonel left nothing, and the sale of the furniture scarce covered the funeral expenses. The maidservant found a scrap of paper, which she handed to Marius. On it were the following lines, written by the Colonel :—

*"For my son.* The Emperor made me a Baron on the field of Waterloo, and as the Restoration contests this title, which I purchased with my blood, my son will assume it and wear it. Of course he will be worthy of it." On the back the Colonel had added : "At this same battle of Waterloo a sergeant saved my life ; his name is Thénardier, and I believe that he has recently kept a small inn in a village near Paris, either Chelles or Montfermeil. If my son meet this Thénardier he will do all he can for him."

Not through any affection for his father, but owing to that vague respect for death which is ever so imperious in the heart of man, Marius took this paper and put it away. Nothing was left of the Colonel. M. Gillenormand had his sword and uniform sold to the Jews ; the neighbours plundered the garden, and carried off the rare flowers, while the others became weeds and died. Marius only remained forty-eight hours in Vernon. After the funeral he returned to Paris and his legal studies, thinking no more of his father than if he had never existed. In two days the Colonel was buried, and in three forgotten.

Marius had a crape on his hat, and that was all.



## CHAPTER V.

## MARIUS MEETS A CHURCHWARDEN.

MARIUS had retained the religious habits of his childhood. One Sunday, when he went to hear Mass at St. Sulpice, in the same Lady's Chapel to which his aunt took him when a boy, being on that day more than usually absent and thoughtful, he placed himself behind a pillar, and knelt, without paying attention to the fact, upon a Utrecht velvet chair, on the back of which was written, "Monsieur Mabœuf, Churchwarden." The Mass had scarce begun when an old gentleman presented himself, and said to Marius,—

"This is my place, sir."

Marius at once stepped aside, and the old gentleman took his seat. When Mass was ended, Marius stood pensively for a few moments, till the old gentleman came up to him and said,—

"I ask your pardon, sir, for having disturbed you just now, and for troubling you afresh at this moment, but you must have considered me ill-bred, and so I wish to explain the matter to you."

"It is unnecessary, sir," said Marius.

"No, it is not," the old man continued, "for I do not wish you to have a bad opinion of me. I am attached to this seat, and it seems to me that the Mass is better here, and I will tell you my reason. To this spot I saw during ten years, at regular intervals of two or three months, a poor, worthy father come, who had no other opportunity or way of seeing his son, because they were separated through family arrangements. He came at the hour when he knew that his son would be brought to Mass. The boy did not suspect that his father was here—perhaps did not know, the innocent, that he had a father. The latter kept behind a pillar so that he might not be seen, looked at his child, and wept; for the poor man adored him, as I could see. This spot has become,

so to speak, sanctified for me, and I have fallen into the habit of hearing Mass here. I prefer it to the bench to which I should have a right as Churchwarden. I even knew the unfortunate gentleman slightly. He had a father-in-law, a rich aunt, and other relatives, who threatened to disinherit the boy if the father ever saw him, and he sacrificed himself that his son might one day be rich and happy. They were separated through political opinions, and though I certainly approve of such opinions, there are persons who do not know where to stop. Good gracious ! because a man was at Waterloo he is not a monster ; a father should not be separated from his child on that account. He was one of Bonaparte's colonels, and is dead, I believe. He lived at Vernon, where I have a brother who is curé, and his name was something like Pontmarie, Montpercy—he had, on my word, a splendid sabre cut."

" Pontmercy," Marius said, turning pale.

" Precisely, Pontmercy ; did you know him ? "

" He was my father, sir."

The old churchwarden clasped his hands and exclaimed, " Ah, you are the boy ! Yes, yes, he would be a man now. Well, poor boy, you may say that you had a father who loved you dearly."

Marius offered his arm to the old gentleman, and conducted him to his house. The next day he said to M. Gillenormand,—

" Some friends of mine have arranged a shooting party, will you allow me to go away for three days ? "

" Four," the grandfather answered, " go and amuse yourself ; " and he whispered to his daughter with a wink, " Some love affair ! "

Where Marius went we shall learn presently. He was away three days, then returned to Paris, went straight to the Library of the Law-school, and asked for a file of the *Moniteur*. He read it, he read all the histories of the Republic and the Empire ; the Memorial of St. Helena, all the memoirs, journals, bulletins, and proclamations—he fairly devoured them. The first time he

## LES MISÉRABLES.

came across his father's name in a bulletin of the Grand Army he had a fever for a whole week. He called upon the generals under whom George Pontmercy had served ; among others, Count H——. The churchwarden, whom he saw again, told him of the life at Vernon, the Colonel's retirement, his flowers, and his solitude. Marius had at last a perfect knowledge of this rare, sublime, and gentle man, this species of lion-lamb—who had been his father.

While occupied with this study, which filled all his moments as well as all his thoughts, he scarce ever saw the Gillenormands. He appeared at meals, but when sought for after them he could not be found. His aunt sulked, but old Gillenormand smiled. "Stuff, stuff, it is the right age;" at times the old man would add, "Confound it, I thought that it was an affair of gallantry, but it seems that it is a passion." It was a passion in truth, for Marius was beginning to adore his father.

At the same time an extraordinary change took place in his ideas, and the phases of this change were numerous and successive. As this is the history of many minds in our day, we deem it useful to follow these phases step by step, and indicate them all. The history he had just read startled him, and the first effect was bedazzlement. The Republic, the Empire, had hitherto been to him but monstrous words—the Republic a guillotine in the twilight ; the Empire a sabre in the night. He had looked into it, and where he had only expected to find a chaos of darkness he had seen, with a species of extraordinary surprise, mingled with fear and delight, stars flashing—Mirabeau, Vergniaud, Saint Just, Robespierre, Camille Desmoulins, and Danton—and a sun rise, Napoleon. He knew not where he was, and he recoiled, blinded by the brilliancy. Gradually, when the first surprise had worn off, he accustomed himself to this radiance. He regarded the deed without dizziness, and examined persons without terror ; the Revolution and the Empire stood out in luminous perspective before his visionary eyeballs ; he saw each of these two groups of events and facts contained in two enormous facts ; the Revolution in the

sovereignty of civic right restored to the masses; the Empire in the sovereignty of the French idea imposed on Europe; he saw the great figure of the people emerge from the Revolution, the great figure of France from the Empire, and he declared to himself on his conscience that all this was good.

He then perceived that up to this moment he had no more understood his country than he did his father. He had known neither the one nor the other, and he had spread a species of voluntary night over his eyes. He now saw, and on one side he admired, on the other he adored. He was full of regret and remorse, and he thought with despair that he could only tell to a tomb all that he had in his mind. Oh, if his father were alive, if he had him still, if God in His compassion and His goodness had allowed this father to be still alive, how he would have flown, how he would have cried to his father, "Father, here I am, it is I! I have the same heart as you! I am your son!" How he would have kissed his white head, bathed his hair with his tears, gazed at his scar, pressed his hand, adored his clothes, and embraced his feet! Oh, why did this father die so soon, before justice had been done him, before he had known his son's love? Marius had a constant sob in his heart, which said at every moment, "Alas!" At the same time he became more truly serious, more truly grave, more sure of his faith and his thoughts. At each instant beams of light arrived to complete his reason, and a species of internal growth went on within him. He felt a natural aggrandizement produced by the two things so new to him—his father and his country.

One night he was alone in his little garret, his candle was lighted, and he was reading at a table by the open window. All sorts of reveries reached him from the space, and were mingled with his thoughts. What a spectacle is night! we hear dull sounds and know not whence they come; we see Jupiter, which is twelve hundred times larger than the earth, glowing like a fire-ball; the blue is black, the stars sparkle, and the whole forms a for-

midable sight. He was reading the bulletins of the Grand Army, those Homeric strophes written on the battlefield; he saw in them at intervals the image of his father, and ever that of the Emperor; the whole of the great Empire was before him; he felt, as it were, a tide within him swelling and mounting; it seemed at moments as if his father passed close to him like a breath, and whispered in his ear; he gradually became strange, he fancied he could hear drums, cannon, and bugles, the measured tread of the battalions, and the hollow, distant gallop of the cavalry; from time to time his eyes were raised and surveyed the colossal constellations flashing in the profundities, and then they fell again upon the book, and he saw in that other colossal things stirring confusedly. His heart was contracted, he was transported, trembling and gasping; and all alone, without knowing what was within him or what he obeyed, he rose, stretched his arms out of the window, looked fixedly at the shadow, the silence, the dark infinitude, the eternal immensity, and shouted, "Long live the Emperor!"

From this moment it was all over. The ogre of Corsica, the usurper, the tyrant, the monster, who was the lover of his own sisters, the actor who took lessons of Talma, the poisoner of Jaffa, the tiger, Buonaparté—all this faded away, and made room in his mind for a radiance in which the pale, marble phantom of Cæsar stood out serenely at an inaccessible height. He was the predestined man who compelled all nations to say—The great nation. He was even more, he was the very incarnation of France, conquering Europe by the sword he held, and the world by the lustre which he emitted. Marius saw in Bonaparte the dazzling spectre which will ever stand on the frontier and guard the future. He was a despot, but a dictator—a despot resulting from a republic, and completing a revolution. Napoleon became for him the people-man, as the Saviour is the God-man.

A prodigious step was made; where he had once seen the downfall of monarchy he now saw the accession of France. The points of his moral compass were changed,

and what had once been sunset was now sunrise ; and all these revolutions took place in turns, without his family suspecting it. When, in this mysterious labour, he had entirely lost his old Bourbonic and Ultra skin, when he had pulled off the aristocrat, the Jacobite, and the Royalist, when he was a perfect Revolutionist, profoundly democratic, and almost republican, he went to an engraver's and ordered one hundred cards, with the address "Baron Marius Pontmercy." This was but the logical consequence of the change which had taken place in him, a change in which everything gravitated round his father. Still, as he knew nobody and could not show his cards at any porter's lodge, he put them in his pocket.

By another natural consequence, in proportion as he drew nearer to his father, his memory, and the things for which the Colonel had fought during five-and-twenty years, he drew away from his grandfather. As we said, M. Gillenormand's humour had not suited him for a long time past, and there already existed between them all the dissonances produced by the contact of a grave young man with a frivolous old man. The gaiety of Geronte offends and exasperates the melancholy of Werther. So long as the same political opinions and ideas had been common to them, Marius met his grandfather upon them as on a bridge, but when the bridge fell there was a great gulf between them ; and then, before all else, Marius had indescribable attacks of revolt when he reflected that it was M. Gillenormand who, through stupid motives, pitilessly tore him from the Colonel, thus depriving father of son and son of father. Through his reverence for his father, Marius had almost grown into an aversion from his grandfather.

Nothing of this, however, was revealed in his demeanour ; he merely became colder than before, laconic at meals, and rarely at home. When his aunt scolded him for it he was very gentle, and alleged as excuse his studies, examinations, conferences, etc. The grandfather, however, still adhered to his infallible diagnostic—"He is in love,

"I know the symptoms." Marius was absent every now and then.

"Where can he go?" the aunt asked.

In one of his trips, which were always very short, he went to Montfermeil in order to obey his father's intimation, and sought for the ex-Sergeant of Waterloo. Thénardier, the landlord. Thénardier had failed, the public-house was shut up, and no one knew what had become of him. In making this search Marius remained away for four days.

"He is decidedly getting out of order," said the grandfather.

They also fancied they could notice that he wore under his shirt something fastened round his neck by a black ribbon.

## CHAPTER VI.

### SOME PETTICOAT.

WE have alluded to a lancer: he was a great-grand-nephew of M. Gillenormand's, on the father's side, who led a garrison life, far away from the domestic hearth. Lieutenant Theodule Gillenormand fulfilled all the conditions required for a man to be a pretty officer: he had a young lady's waist, a victorious way of clanking his sabre, and turned-up moustaches. He came very rarely to Paris, so rarely that Marius had never seen him, and the two cousins only knew each other by name. Theodule was, we think we said, the favourite of Aunt Gillenormand, who preferred him because she never saw him; for not seeing people allows of every possible perfection being attributed to them.

One morning Mlle. Gillenormand the elder returned to her apartments, as much affected as her general placidity would allow. Marius had again asked his grandfather's permission to make a short trip, adding that he wished to start that same evening. "Go," the grandfather answered; and he added to himself, as he pursed up his

eye, "Another relapse of sleeping from home." Mlle. Gillenormand went up to her room greatly puzzled, and cast to the staircase this exclamation, "It's too much!" and this question, "But where is it that he goes?" She caught a glimpse of some more or less illicit love adventure, of a woman in the shadow, a meeting, a mystery, and would not have felt vexed to have a closer peep at it through her spectacles. Scenting a mystery is like the first bite at a piece of scandal, and holy souls do not detest it. In the secret compartments of bigotry there is some curiosity for scandal.

She was, therefore, suffering from a vague appetite to learn a story. In order to distract this curiosity, which agitated her a little beyond her wont, she took refuge in her talents, and began festooning with cotton upon cotton one of those embroideries of the Empire and the Restoration, in which there are a great many cabriolet wheels. It was a clumsy job, and the workwoman was awkward. She had been sitting over it for some hours when the door opened. Mlle. Gillenormand raised her nose, and saw Lieutenant Theodule before her, making his regulation salute. She uttered a cry of delight; for a woman may be old, a prude, devout, and an aunt, but she is always glad to see a lancer enter her room.

"You here, Theodule!" she exclaimed.

"In passing, my dear aunt."

"Well, kiss me."

"There," said Theodule, as he kissed her. Aunt Gillenormand walked to her secretaire and opened it.

"You will stop the week out?"

"My dear aunt, I am off again to-night."

"Impossible!"

"Mathematically."

"Stay, my little Theodule, I beg of you."

"The heart says Yes, but duty says No. The story is very simple; we are changing garrison; we were at Melun, and are sent to Gaillon. In order to go to the new garrison we were obliged to pass through Paris, and I said to myself, 'I will go and see my aunt.'"



"And here's for your trouble."

And she slipped ten louis into his hand.

"You mean to say for my pleasure, dear aunt."

Theodule kissed her a second time, and she had the pleasure of having her neck slightly grazed by his gold-laced collar.

"Are you travelling on horseback, with your regiment?"

"No, my aunt; I have come to see you by special permission. My servant is leading my horse, and I shall travel by the diligence. By the way, there is one thing I want to ask you."

"What is it?"

"It appears that my cousin Marius Pontmercy is going on a journey too?"

"How do you know that?" the aunt said, her curiosity being greatly tickled.

"On reaching Paris I went to the coach-office to take my place in the *coupé*."

"Well?"

"A traveller had already taken a seat in the *Impériale*, and I saw his name in the way-bill: it was Marius Pontmercy."

"Oh, the scamp," the aunt exclaimed. "Ah! your cousin is not a steady lad like you. To think that he is going to pass the night in a diligence!"

"Like myself."

"You do it through duty, but he does it through disorder."

"The deuce!" said Theodule.

Here an event occurred to Mademoiselle Gillenormand the elder: she had an idea. If she had been a man she would have struck her forehead. She addressed Theodule.

"You are aware that your cousin does not know you?"

"I have seen him, but he never deigned to notice me."

"Where is the diligence going to?"

"To Andelys."

"Is Marius going there?"

"Unless he stops on the road, like myself. I get out

at Vernon, to take the Gaillon coach. I know nothing about Marius's route."

"Marius! what an odious name! what an idea it was to call him that! Well, your name, at least, is Theodule."

"I would rather it was Alfred," the officer said.

"Listen, Theodule; Marius absents himself from the house."

"Eh, eh!"

"He goes about the country."

"Ah, ah!"

"He sleeps out."

"Oh, oh!"

"We should like to know the meaning of all this."

Theodule replied, with the calmness of a bronze man.  
"Some petticoat!"

And with that inward chuckle which evidences a certainty, he added, "Some wench!"

"That is evident!" the aunt exclaimed, who believed that she heard M. Gillenormand speaking, and who felt his conviction issue irresistibly from that word "wench," accentuated almost in the same way by grand-uncle and grand-nephew. She continued,—

"Do us a pleasure by following Marius a little. As he does not know you, that will be an easy matter. Since there is a girl in the case, try to get a look at her, and write and tell us all about it, for it will amuse your grandfather."

Theodule had no excessive inclination for this sort of watching, but he was greatly affected by the ten louis, and he believed he could see a possible continuation of such gifts. He accepted the commission, and said, "As you please, aunt," and added in an aside, "I am a duenna now!"

Mlle. Gillenormand kissed him.

"You would not play such tricks as that, Theodule, for you obey discipline, are the slave of duty, and a scrupulous man, and would never leave your family to go and see a creature."

The lancer made the satisfied grimace of Cartouche when praised for his probity.

Marius, on the evening that followed this dialogue, got into the diligence, not suspecting that he was watched. As for the watcher, the first thing he did was to fall asleep, and his sleep was complete and conscientious. Argus snored the whole night. At daybreak the guard shouted, "Vernon; passengers for Vernon, get out here!" and Lieutenant Theodule got out.

"All right," he growled, still half asleep, "I get out here."

Then his memory growing gradually clearer, he thought of his aunt, the ten louis, and the account he had promised to render of Marius's sayings and doings. This made him laugh.

"He is probably no longer in the coach," he thought, while buttoning up his jacket. "He may have stopped at Poissy, he may have stopped at Triel, if he did not get out at Meulan, he may have done so at Mantes, unless he stopped at Rolleboise, or only went as far as Passy, with the choice of turning on his left to Estreux, or on his right to La Rocheguyon. Run after him, aunty. What the deuce shall I write to the old lady?"

At this moment the leg of a black trouser appeared against the window-pane of the *coupé*.

"Can it be Marius?" the lieutenant said.

It was Marius. A little peasant girl was offering flowers to the passengers, and crying, "Bouquets for your ladies." Marius went up to her, and bought the finest flowers in her basket.

"By Jove," said Theodule, as he leaped out of the *coupé*, "the affair is growing piquant. Who the deuce is he going to carry those flowers to? she must be a deucedly pretty woman to deserve so handsome a bouquet. I must have a look at her."

And then he began following Marius, no longer by order, but through personal curiosity, like those dogs which hunt on their own account. Marius paid no attention to Theodule. Some elegant women were getting out of the diligence, but he did not look at them; he seemed to see nothing around him.

"He must be preciouslv in love," Theodule thought. Marius proceeded toward the church.

"That's glorious!" Theodule said to himself, "the church, that's the thing. Rendezvous-spiced with a small amount of Mass are the best. Nothing is so exquisite as an ogle exchanged in the presence of the Virgin."

On reaching the church, Marius did not go in, but disappeared behind one of the buttresses of the apse.

"The meeting outside," Theodule said; "now for a look at the wench."

And he walked on tip-toe up to the corner which Marius had gone round, and on reaching it stopped in stupefaction. Marius, with his forehead in both his hands, was kneeling in the grass upon a tomb, and had spread his flowers out over it. At the head of the grave was a cross of black wood, with this name in white letters—"COLONEL BARON PONTMERCY." Marius could be heard sobbing.

The girl was a tomb.

## • CHAPTER VII.

### MARBLE AGAINST GRANITE.

It is hither that Marius had come the first time that he absented himself from Paris; it was to this spot he retired each time that M. Gillenormand said, "He sleeps out." Lieutenant Theodule was absolutely discountenanced by this unexpected elbowing of a tomb, and felt a disagreeable and singular sensation, which he was incapable of analyzing, and which was composed of respect for a tomb, mingled with respect for a colonel. He fell back, leaving Marius alone in the cemetery, and there was discipline in this retreat; death appeared to him wearing heavy epaulettes, and he almost gave it the military salute. Not knowing what to write to his aunt, he resolved not to write at all; and there would probably have been no result from Theodule's discovery of Marius's amour had not, by one of those mysterious arrangements

so frequent in accident, the scene at Vernon had almost immediately a sort of counterpart in Paris.

Marius returned from Vernon very early on the morning of the third day, and wearied by two nights spent in a diligence, and feeling the necessity of repairing his want of sleep by an hour at the swimming-school, he hurried up to his room, only took the time to take off his travelling coat and the black ribbon which he had round his neck, and went to the bath. M. Gillenormand, who rose at an early hour like all old men who are in good health, heard him come in, and hastened as quick as his old legs would carry him up the stairs leading to Marius's garret, in order to welcome him back, and try and discover his movements. But the young man had taken less time in descending than the octogenarian in ascending, and when Father Gillenormand entered the garret Marius was no longer there. The bed had been unoccupied, and on it lay the coat and black ribbon unsuspectingly.

"I prefer that," said M. Gillenormand, and a moment later he entered the drawing-room, where Mlle. Gillenormand the elder was already seated embroidering her cabriolet wheels. The entrance was triumphant, M. Gillenormand held in one hand the coat, in the other the neck-ribbon, and shouted,—

"Victory! we are going to penetrate the mystery, we are going to know the cream of the joke, we are going to lay our hands on the libertinage of our cunning gentleman. Here is the romance itself, for I have the portrait."

In fact a box of shagreen leather, much like a miniature, was suspended from the ribbon. The old man took hold of this box, and looked at it for some time without opening, with the air of pleasure, eagerness, and anger of a poor, starving fellow, who sees a splendid dinner, of which he will have no share, carried past under his nose.

"It is evidently a portrait, and I am up to that sort of thing. It is worn tenderly on the heart—what asses they are! Some abominable gorgon, who will probably make me shudder, for young men have such bad taste nowadays."

"Let us look, father," the old maid said.

The box opened by pressing a spring, but they only found in it a carefully folded-up paper.

"*From the same to the same,*" said M. Gillenormand, bursting into a laugh. "I know what it is, a billet-doux !"

"Indeed ! let us read it," said the aunt ; and she put on her spectacles. They unfolded the paper and read as follows :—

"*For my son.* The Emperor made me a Baron on the field of Waterloo, and as the Restoration contests this title, which I purchased with my blood, my son will assume it and wear it ; of course he will be worthy of it."

What the father and daughter felt, it is not possible to describe ; but they were chilled as if by the breath of a death's head. They did not exchange a syllable. M. Gillenormand merely said in a low voice, and as if speaking to himself, "It is that trooper's handwriting." The hand examined the slip of paper, turned it about in all directions, and then placed it again in the box.

At the same instant, a small square packet, wrapped up in blue paper, fell from a pocket of the great-coat. Mlle. Gillenormand picked it up and opened the blue paper. It contained Marius's one hundred cards, and she passed one to M. Gillenormand, who read, "Baron Marius Pontmercy." The old man rang, and Nicolette came in. M. Gillenormand took the ribbon, the box, and the coat, threw them on the ground in the middle of the room, and said,—

"Remove that rubbish."

A long hour passed in the deepest silence ; the old man and the old maid were sitting back to back and thinking, probably both of the same things. At the end of this hour, Mlle. Gillenormand said, "Very pretty !" A few minutes after, Marius came in ; even before he crossed the threshold he perceived his grandfather holding one of his cards in his hand. On seeing Marius he exclaimed, with his air of bourgeois and grimacing superiority, which had something crushing about it,—

"Stay! stay! stay! stay! stay! You are a Baron at present; I must congratulate you. What does this mean?"

Marius blushed slightly, and answered,—

"It means that I am my father's son."

M. Gillenormand left off laughing, and said harshly, "I am your father."

"My father," Marius continued with downcast eyes and a stern air, "was an humble and heroic man, who gloriously served the Republic of France, who was great in the greatest history which men have ever made, who lived for a quarter of a century in a bivouac, by day under a shower of grape-shot and bullets, and at night in snow, mud, wind, and rain. He was a man who took two flags, received twenty wounds, died in forgetfulness and abandonment, and who had never committed but one fault, that of loving too dearly two ungrateful beings—his country and myself."

This was more than M. Gillenormand could hear; at the word Republic he had risen, or, more correctly, sprung up. Each of the words that Marius had just uttered had produced on the old gentleman's face the same effect as the blast of a forge-bellows upon a burning log. From gloomy he became red, from red, purple, and from purple, flaming.

"Marius," he shouted, "you abominable boy! I know not who your father was, and do not wish to know. I know nothing about it, but what I do know is, that there never were any but scoundrels among all those people; they were all rogues, assassins, red-caps, robbers! I say all, I say all! I know nobody! I say all; do you understand me, Marius? You must know that you are as much a Baron as my slipper is! They were all bandits who served Robespierre! they were all brigands who served B-u-o-naparté! all traitors who betrayed, betrayed, betrayed their legitimate king! all cowards who ran away from the Prussians and the English at Waterloo. That is what I know. If your father was among them, I am ignorant of the fact, and am sorry for it. I am your humble servant!"

In his turn, Marius became the brand, and M. Gillenormand the bellows. Marius trembled all over, he knew not what to do, and his head was aglow. He was the priest who sees his consecrated wafers cast to the wind, the Fakir who notices a passer-by spit on his idol. It was impossible that such things could be said with impunity in his presence, but what was he to do? His father had just been trampled under foot, and insulted in his presence, but by whom? by his grandfather. How was he to avenge the one without outraging the other? It was impossible for him to insult his grandfather, and equally impossible for him not to avenge his father. On one side was a sacred tomb, on the other was white hair. He tottered for a few moments like a drunken man, then raised his eyes, looked fixedly at his grandfather, and shouted in a thundering voice,—

“Down with the Bourbons, and that great pig of a Louis XVIII.!”

Louis XVIII. had been dead four years, but that made no difference to him. The old man, who had been scarlet, suddenly became whiter than his hair. He turned to a bust of the Duc de Berry which was on the mantelpiece, and bowed to it profoundly with a sort of singular majesty. Then he walked twice, slowly and silently, from the mantelpiece to the window, and from the window to the mantelpiece, crossing the whole room, and making the boards creak as if he were a walking marble statue. The second time he leant over his daughter, who was looking at the disturbance with the stupor of an old sheep, and said to her with a smile which was almost calm,—

“A Baron like this gentleman, and a bourgeois like myself, can no longer remain beneath the same roof.”

And suddenly drawing himself up, livid, trembling, and terrible, with his forehead dilated by the fearful radiance of passion, he stretched out his arm toward Marius, and shouted, “Begone!”

Marius left the house, and on the morrow M. Gillenormand said to his daughter,—



"You will send every six months sixty pistoles to that blood-drinker, and never mention his name to me."

Marius, on his side, left the house indignant, and a circumstance aggravated his exasperation. There are always small fatalities of this nature to complicate domestic dramas: the anger is augmented although the wrongs are not in reality increased. In hurriedly conveying, by the grandfather's order, Marius's rubbish, to his bedroom, Nicolette, without noticing the fact, let fall, probably on the attic stairs, which were dark, the black shagreen case in which was the paper written by the Colonel. As neither could be found, Marius felt convinced that "Monsieur Gillenormand"—he never called him otherwise from that date—had thrown "his father's will" into the fire. He knew by heart the few lines written by the Colonel, and, consequently, nothing was lost; but the paper, the writing, this sacred relic—all this was his heart. What had been done with it?

Marius went away without saying where he was going and without knowing, with thirty francs, his watch, and some clothes in a carpet-bag. He jumped into a cabriolet, engaged it by the hour, and proceeded at all risks towards the Latin quarter. What would become of Marius?

## BOOK IV.

---

### CHAPTER I.

#### A GROUP THAT NEARLY BECAME HISTORICAL.

AT this epoch, which was apparently careless, a certain revolutionary quivering was vaguely felt. There were breezes in the air which returned from the depths of '89 and '92; and the young men, if we may be forgiven the expression, were in the moulting stage. Men became transformed, almost without suspecting it, by the mere movement of time, for the hand which moves round the clock-face also moves in the mind. Each took the forward step he had to take; the Royalists became liberals, and the Liberals democrats. It was like a rising tide complicated by a thousand ebbs, and it is the peculiarity of ebbs to cause things to mingle. Hence came very singular combinations of ideas, and men adored liberty and Napoleon at the same time.

There were not as yet in France any of those vast subjacent organizations, like the Tugendbund of Germany or the Carbonari of Italy; but here and there were dark subterranean passages with extensive ramifications. The *Cougourde* was started at Aix; and there was at Paris, among other affiliations of this nature, the society of the friends of the A. B. C.

Who were the friends of the A. B. C.? A society, whose ostensible object was the education of children, but the real one the elevation of men. They called themselves friends of the A. B. C., and the people were the *Abaissés* whom they wished to raise. It would be wrong to laugh at this pun, for puns at times are serious in politics; wit-

nesses of this are the *Castratus ad Castra*, which made Narses general of an army; the *Bandari* and *Barberini*; *fueros fuegos*; *tu es Petrus et super hanc Petram*, etc., etc. The friends of the A. B. C. were few in number; it was a secret society, in a state of embryo, and we might almost call it a coterie, if coteries produced heroes. They assembled at two places in Paris; at a cabaret called *Corinthe* near the Halles, to which we shall revert hereafter, and near the Pantheon, in a small café on the Place St. Michel, known as the Café Musain, and now demolished: the first of these meeting-places was contiguous to the workmen, and the second to the students. The ordinary discussions of the friends of the A. B. C. were held in a back room of the Café Musain.

Most of the friends of the A. B. C. were students, who maintained a cordial understanding with a few workmen. Here are the names of the principal members, which belong in a certain measure to history—Enjolras, Combeferre, Jean Prouvaire, Feuilly, Courfeyrac, Bahorel, Lesgle or Laigle, Joly, and Grantaire. These young men formed a species of family through their friendship, and all came from the South, excepting Laigle. This group is remarkable, although it has vanished in the invisible depths which are behind us. At the point of this drama which we have now attained, it will not be labour lost, perhaps, to throw a ray of light upon these heads, before the reader watches them enter the shadows of a tragical adventure.

Enjolras, whom we named first, it will be seen afterwards why, was an only son, and rich. He was a charming young man, capable of becoming terrible; he was angelically beautiful, and looked like a stern Antinous. He had only one passion, justice, and only one thought, overthrowing the obstacle. On the Mons Aventinus, he would have been Gracchus; in the Convention, he would have been St. Just. He scarcely noticed roses, was ignorant of spring, and did not hear the birds sing; the bare throat of Evadne would have affected him as little as it did Aristogiton: to him, as to Harmodius, flowers were only

good to conceal the sword. He was stern in his joy, and before all that was not the Republic, he chastely lowered his eyes—he was the marble lover of liberty.

By the side of Enjolras, who represented the logic of the Revolution, Combeferre represented its philosophy. Between the logic and the philosophy of revolutions, there is this difference, that the logic may conclude in war, while its philosophy can only lead to peace. Combeferre completed and rectified Enjolras; he was not so tall, but broader. He wished that the extended principles of general ideas should be poured over minds, and said, "Revolution but civilization!" and he opened the vast blue horizon around the peaked mountain. Hence there was something accessible and practicable in all Combeferre's views; and the Revolution with him was more respectable than with Enjolras.

Jean Prouvaire was of an even softer tinge than Combeferre; he was called "Jehan," through that little momentary fantasy which was blended with the powerful and profound movement, from which issued the most necessary study of the Middle Ages. Jean Prouvaire was in love, cultivated a pot of flowers, played the flute, wrote verses, loved the people, pitied women, wept over children, confounded in the same confidence the future and God, and blamed the Revolution for having caused a royal head to fall, that of André Chénier. Like Enjolras, he was rich, and an only son; he talked softly, hung his head, looked down, smiled with an embarrassed air, dressed badly, had an awkward gait, blushed at a nothing, and was very timid; with all that he was intrepid.

Feuilly was a journeyman fan-maker, doubly an orphan, who laboriously earned three francs a day, and had only one idea—to deliver the world. He had another pre-occupation as well, instructing himself, which he called self-deliverance. He had taught himself to read and write; and all that he knew he had learned alone. Feuilly had a generous heart, and hugged the world. This orphan had adopted the peoples, and as he had no mother, he meditated on his country. He had wished that there

## LES MISÉRABLES.

should not be in the world a man who had no country, and he brooded over what we now call the "idea of nationalities" with the profound divination of the man of the people. He had studied history expressly that he might be indignant with a knowledge of the fact, and in this youthful assembly of Utopians who were specially interested about France, he represented the foreign element. His speciality was Greece, Poland, Roumania, Hungary, and Italy; he pronounced these names incessantly, in season and out of season, with the tenacity of right.

Courfeyrac had a father who was known as M. de Courfeyrac. One of the incorrect ideas of the bourgeoisie of the Restoration in the matter of the aristocracy and the nobility was a belief in the particle. The particle, as we know, has no meaning, but the bourgeois of the time of the *Minerve* esteemed this poor *de* so highly that persons thought themselves obliged to abdicate it. M. de Chauvelin called himself M. Chauvelin; M. de Caumartin, M. Caumartin; M. de Constant de Rebecque, Benjamin Constant; and M. de Lafayette, M. Lafayette. Courfeyrac was unwilling to remain behindhand, and called himself Courfeyrac quite short. As concerns this gentleman, we might almost stop here and content ourselves with saying as to the rest, *for* Courfeyrac read Tholomys; Courfeyrac, in fact, had those sallies of youth which might be called a mental *beauté du diable*. At a later date this expires like the prettiness of the kitten; and all this grace produces, upon two feet the bourgeois, and on four paws the tom-cat.

Bahorel had been mixed up in the sanguinary tumult of June 1822, on the occasion of the burial of young Lallemand. Bahorel was a being of good temper and bad company, an honest fellow and a spendthrift, prodigal and meeting with generosity, chattering and meeting with eloquence, bold and meeting with effrontery; and the very best clay for the devil's moulding imaginable. He displayed daring waistcoats and scarlet opinions; he was a turbulent on a grand scale, that is to say, that he liked nothing so much as a quarrel unless it were an *emeute*, and nothing so much as an *emeute* except a revolution.

There was in this assembly of young men a bald-headed member. The Marquis d'Avaray, whom Louis XVIII. made a duke because he helped him to get into a hired cab on the day when he emigrated, used to tell how, when the King landed in 1814 at Calais upon his return to France, a man handed him a petition.

"What do you want?" the King said.

"A postmastership, sire."

"What is your name?"

"L'Aigle."

The King frowned, but looked at the signature of the petition, and read the name thus written, LESGLE. This, anything but Bonapartist orthography, touched the King, and he began smiling. "Sire," the man with the petition went on, "my ancestor was a whipper-in of the name of Lesgueules, and my name came from that. I called myself Lesgueules, by contraction Lesgle, and by corruption L'Aigle." This remark caused the King to smile still more, and at a later date he gave the man the post-office at Meaux, purposely or through a mistake. The bald Mentor of the group was a son of this Lesgle or Legle, and signed himself Legle (of Meaux). His comrades, to shorten this, called him Bossuet, who, as everybody knows, was christened the Eagle of Meaux.

Bossuet was a merry fellow, who was unlucky, and his speciality was to succeed in nothing. *Per contra*, he laughed at everything. At the age of five-and-twenty he was bald; his father left him a house and a field, but the son knew nothing so pressing as to lose them both in a swindling speculation, and nothing was left him. He had learning and sense, but he failed in everything and everything cozened him; whatever he built up broke down under him. If he chopped wood he cut his fingers; and if he had a mistress, he speedily discovered that she had also a friend.

Joly was a student of medicine, of two years' younger standing than Bossuet, and was the young *malade imaginaire*. What he had gained by his medical studies was to be more a patient than a doctor, for at the age of

twenty-three he fancied himself a valetudinarian, and spent his life in looking at his tongue in a mirror. He declared that a man becomes magnetized like a needle, and in his room he placed his bed with the head to the south and the feet to the north, so that at night the circulation of his blood might not be impeded by the great magnetic current of the globe. In storms he felt his pulse, but for all that was the gayest of all.

All these young men, who differed so greatly, and of whom, after all, we must speak seriously, had the same religion—Progress. They were all the direct sons of the French Revolution, and the lightest among them became serious when pronouncing the date of '89. Their fathers in the flesh were, or had been, feuilletants, royalists, or doctrinaires, but that was of little consequence; this pell-mell, anterior to themselves, who were young, did not concern them, and the pure blood of principles flowed in their veins; they attached themselves, without any intermediate tinge, to incorruptible right and absolute duty.

Amid all these impassioned hearts and convinced minds there was a sceptic; how did he get there? through juxtaposition. The name of this sceptic was Grantaire, and he usually wrote it after the manner of a charade—R.\* Grantaire was a man who carefully avoided believing in anything; he was, however, one of these students who had learned the most during a Parisian residence. He knew that the best coffee was at Lemblier's, and the best billiard-table at the Café Voltaire; that excellent cakes and agreeable girls could be found at the Hermitage on the Boulevard du Maine, spatch-cocks at Mother Saquet's, excellent matelottes at the Barrière de la Cunette, and a peculiar white wine at the Barrière du Combat. Besides all this, he was a mighty drinker. He was abominably ugly.

This sceptic, however, had a fanaticism; it was neither an idea, a dogma, an act, nor a sense; it was a man—Enjolras. Grantaire admired, loved, and revered Enjolras. Whom did this anarchical doubter cling to in

\* Grantaire=Grand R.

this phalanx of absolute minds? to the most absolute. In what way did Enjolras subjugate him? by ideas? No, but by character. This is a frequently-observed phenomena, and a sceptic who clings to a believer is as simple as the law of complementary colours. What we do not possess attracts us; no one loves daylight like the blind man; the dwarf adores the drum-major, and the frog has its eyes constantly fixed on heaven to see the bird fly. Grantaire, in whom doubt grovelled, liked to see faith soaring in Enjolras, and he felt the want of him, without clearly understanding it, or even dreaming of explaining the fact to himself. This chaste, healthy, firm, upright, harsh, and candid nature charmed him, and he instinctively admired his contrary.

## CHAPTER II.

### A FUNERAL ORATION.

ON a certain afternoon, which, as we shall see, has some coincidence with the events recorded above, Laigle de Meaux was lazily leaning against the door-post of the Café Musain. He looked like a caryatid out for a holiday, and having nothing to carry but his reverie. Leaning on one's shoulder is a mode of lying down upright which is not disliked by dreamers. Laigle de Meaux was thinking, without melancholy, of a slight misadventure which had occurred to him on the previous day but one at the Law-school, and modified his personal plans for the future, which, as it was, were somewhat indistinct.

Reverie does not prevent a cabriolet from passing, or a dreamer from noticing the cabriolet. Laigle, whose eyes were absently wandering, saw through this somnambulism a two-wheeled vehicle moving across the Place St. Michel at a foot pace and apparently undecided. What did this cab want? why was it going so slowly? Laigle looked at it, and saw inside a young man seated by the side of the driver, and in front of the young man



a carpet-bag. The bag displayed to passers-by this name, written in large black letters on the card sewn to the cloth, **MARIUS PONTMERCY**. This name made Laigle change his attitude : he drew himself up, and shouted to the young man in the cab, " M. Marius Pontmercy."

The cab stopped, on being thus hailed, and the young man, who also appeared to be thinking deeply, raised his eyes.

" Hilloh ? " he said.

" Are you M. Pontmercy ? "

" Yes."

" I was looking for you," Laigle of Meaux continued.

" How so ? " asked Marius, for it was really he, who had just left his grandfather's, and had before him a face which he saw for the first time. " I do not know you."

" And I don't know you either."

Marius fancied that he had to do with a practical joker, and, as he was not in the best of tempers at the moment, frowned. Laigle imperturbably continued,—

" You were not at lecture the day before yesterday ! "

" Very possibly."

" It is certain."

" Are you a student ? " Marius asked.

" Yes, sir, like yourself. The day before yesterday I entered the Law-school by chance ; as you know, a man has an idea like that sometimes. The Professor was engaged in calling over, and you are aware how ridiculously strict they are in the school at the present moment. Upon the third call remaining unanswered, your name is erased from the list, and sixty francs are gone."

Marius began to listen, and Laigle continued,—

" It was Blondeau who was calling over. You know Blondeau has a pointed and most malicious nose, and scents the absent with delight. He craftily began with the letter P, and I did not listen, because I was not compromised by that letter. The roll-call went on capitally, there was no erasure, and the universe was present. Blondeau was sad, and I said to myself aside, ' Blondeau, my love, you will not perform the slightest

execution to-day.' All at once Blondeau calls out, 'Marius Pontmercy.' No one answered, and so Blondeau, full of hope, repeats in a louder voice, 'Marius Pontmercy,' and takes up his pen. I have bowels, sir, and said to myself hurriedly, 'The name of a good fellow is going to be erased. Attention! he is not a proper student, a student who studies, a reading man, a pedantic sap, strong in science, literature, theology, and philosophy. No, he is an honourable idler, who lounges about, enjoys the country, cultivates the grisette, pays his court to the ladies, and is perhaps with my mistress at this moment. I must save him: death to Blondeau!' At this moment Blondeau dipped his pen, black with erasures, into the ink, looked round his audience, and repeated for the third time, 'Marius Pontmercy!' I answered, 'Here!' and so your name was not erased."

"Sir!" Marius exclaimed.

"And mine was," Laigle of Meaux added.

"I do not understand you," said Marius.

Laigle continued,—

"And yet it was very simple. I was near the desk to answer, and near the door to bolt. The Professor looked at me with a certain fixedness, and suddenly Blondeau, who must be the crafty nose to which Boileau refers, leaps to the letter L, which is my letter, for I come from Meaux, and my name is L'Esgle."

"L'Aigle!" Marius interrupted, "what a glorious name."

"Blondeau arrives, sir, at that glorious name, and exclaims, 'L'Aigle!' I answer, 'Here!' Then Blondeau looks at me with the gentleness of a tiger, smiles, and says, 'If you are Pontmercy you are not Laigle,' a phrase which appears offensive to you, but which was only lugubrious for me. After saying this, he erased me."

Marius exclaimed,—

"I am really mortified, sir——"

"Before all" Laigle interrupted. "I ask leave to embalm Blondeau in a few phrases of heart-felt praise. I will suppose him dead, and there will not be much to

alter in his thinness, paleness, coldness, stiffness, and smell, and I say, *Erudimini qui iudicatis terram*. Here lies Blondeau the nosy, Blondeau Nasica, the ox of discipline, *bos disciplina*, the mastiff of duty, the angel of the roll-call, who was straight, square, exact, rigid, honest, and hideous. GOD erased him as he erased me."

Marius continued, "I am most grieved——"

"Young man," said Laigle, "let this serve you as a lesson; in future be punctual."

"I offer you a thousand apologies."

"And do not run the risk of getting your neighbour erased."

"I am in despair——"

Laigle burst into a laugh.

"And I am enchanted. I was on the downward road to become a lawyer, and this erasure saves me. I renounce the triumphs of the bar. I will not defend the orphan or attack the widow. I have obtained my expulsion, and I am indebted to you for it, M. Pontmercy. I intend to pay you a solemn visit of thanks—where do you live?"

"In this cab," said Marius.

"A sign of opulence," Laigle remarked calmly; "I congratulate you, for you have apartments at nine thousand francs a year."

At this moment Courfeyrac came out of the café. Marius smiled sadly.

"I have been in this lodging for two hours, and am eager to leave it, but I do not know where to go."

"Come home with me," Courfeyrac said to him.

"I ought to have the priority," Laigle observed, "but then I have no home."

"Hold your tongue, Bossuet," Courfeyrac remarked.

"Bossuet," said Marius, "why you told me your name was Laigle."

"Of Meaux," Laigle answered, "metaphorically, Bossuet."

Courfeyrac got into the cab.

"Hotel de la Porte St. Jacques, driver," he said.

The same evening, Marius was installed in a room in this house, next door to Courfeyrac.

---

## CHAPTER III.

## MARIUS IS ASTONISHED.

IN a few days Marius was a friend of Courfeyrac, for youth is the season of prompt weldings and rapid cicatrisations. Marius by the side of Courfeyrac breathed freely, a great novelty for him. Courfeyrac asked him no questions, and did not even think of doing so, for at that age faces tell everything at once, and words are unnecessary. There are some young men of whose countenances you may say that they gossip—you look at them and know them. One morning, however, Courfeyrac suddenly asked him the question,—

“By the way, have you any political opinion?”

“Of course!” said Marius, almost offended by the question.

“What are you?”

“Bonapartist—democrat.”

“Grey shade of quiet mouse-colour,” Courfeyrac remarked.

On the next day he led Marius to the Café Musain, and whispered in his ear with a smile, “I must introduce you to the Revolution,” and he led him to the room of the Friends of the A. B. C. He introduced him to his companions, saying in a low voice, “a pupil,” which Marius did not at all comprehend. Marius had fallen into a mental wasps’ nest, but though he was silent and grave, he was not the less winged and armed.

Marius, hitherto solitary, and muttering soliloquies and asides through habit and taste, was somewhat startled by the swarm of young men around him. The tumultuous movement of all these minds at liberty and at work made his ideas whirl, and at times, in his confusion, they

flew so far from him that he had a difficulty in finding them again. He heard philosophy, literature, art, history, and religion spoken of in an unexpected way; he caught a glimpse of strange aspects, and as he did not place them in perspective, he was not sure that he was not gazing at chaos. On giving up his grandfather's opinions for those of his father, he believed himself settled; but he now suspected, anxiously, and not daring to confess it to himself, that it was not so. The angle in which he looked at everything was beginning to be displaced afresh, and a certain oscillation shook all the horizons of his brain. It was a strange internal moving of furniture, and it almost made him ill.

It seemed as if there were no "sacred things" for these young men, and Marius heard singular remarks about all sorts of matters which were offensive to his still timid mind. A play-bill came under notice, adorned with the title of an old stock tragedy, of the so-called classical school. "Down with the tragedy dear to the bourgeois!" Bahorel shouted, and Marius heard Combeferre reply,—

"You are wrong, Bahorel. The cits love tragedy, and they must be left at peace upon that point. Periwigged tragedy has a motive, and I am not one of those who for love of Æschylus contests its right to exist. There are sketches in nature and ready-made parodies in creation; a beak which is no beak, wings which are no wings, gills which are no gills, feet which are no feet, a dolorous cry which makes you inclined to laugh—there you have the duck. Now, since poultry exist by the side of the bird, I do not see why classic tragedy should not exist face to face with ancient tragedy."

Or else it happened accidentally that Marius passed along the Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau between Enjolras and Courfeyrac, and the latter seized his arm.

"Pay attention! this is the Rue Plûtrière, now called Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau, on account of a singular family that lived here sixty years back, and they were Jean Jacques and Thérèse. From time to time little

creatures were born; Thérèse fondled them, and Jean Jacques took them to the Foundling "

And Enjolras reproved Courfeyrac.

" Silence before Jean Jacques ! for I admire that man. I grant that he abandoned his children, but he adopted the people."

Not one of these young men ever uttered the words—the Emperor; Jean Prouvaire alone sometimes said Napoleon; all the rest spoke of Bonaparte. Enjolras pronounced it Buonaparte. Marius was vaguely astonished—it was *initium sapientiæ*.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE BACK ROOM OF THE CAFÉ MUSAIN.

ONE of the conversations among the young men at which Marius was present, and in which he mingled now and then, was a thorough shock for his mind. It came off in the back room of the Café Musain, and nearly all the friends of the A. B. C. were collected on that occasion, and the chandelier was solemnly lighted. They talked about one thing and another, without passion and with noise, and with the exception of Enjolras and Marius, who were silent; each harangued somewhat haphazard. Conversations among chums at times display these peaceful tumults. It was a game and a pell-mell as much as a conversation; words were thrown and caught up, and students were talking in all the four corners.

No female was admitted into this back room, excepting Louison, the washer-up of cups, who crossed it from time to time to go from the wash-house to the "laboratory." Grantaire, who was frightfully intoxicated, was deafening the corner he had seized upon, by shouting things, reasonable and unreasonable, in a thundering voice:—

" I am thirsty. Mortals, I have dreamt that the tun of Heidelberg had a fit of apoplexy, and that I was one of the dozen leeches applied to it. I want to drink, for I

desire to forget life. Life is a hideous invention of somebody whom I am unacquainted with. It lasts no time and is worth nothing, and a man breaks his neck to live. Life is a scenery in which there are no practicables, and happiness is an old side-scene only painted on one side. The Ecclesiastes says, All is vanity, and I agree with the worthy gentleman, who possibly never existed. Zero, not liking to go about naked, clothed itself in vanity. Oh vanity! the dressing up of everything in big words! A kitchen is a laboratory, a dancer a professor, a mountebank a gymnast, a boxer a pugilist, an apothecary a chemist, a barber an artist, a bricklayer an architect, a jockey a sportsman, and a wood-louse a pterygibranch. Vanity has an obverse and a reverse; the obverse is stupid—it is the negro with his glass beads; the reverse is ridiculous—it is the philosopher in his rags. I weep over the one and laugh at the other. But for all that I have always had sense; when I was a pupil of Gros, instead of daubing sketches, I spent my time in priggish apples. I am a voluptuary. I dine at Richard's for fifty sous, and I want Persian carpets in which to roll the naked Cleopatra. Where is Cleopatra? ah, it is you, Louison? Good-evening."

Thus poured forth Grantaire, more than drunk, as he seized the plate-washer as she passed his corner. Bossuet, stretching out his hand toward him, strove to make him be silent, but Grantaire broke out afresh.

"Eagle of Meaux, down with your paws; you produce no effect upon me with your gesture of Hippocrates refusing the *bric à brac* of Artaxerxes. You need not attempt to calm me, and besides I am melancholy. What would you have me say? Man is bad, man is a deformity; the butterfly is a success, but man a mistake. God made a failure with that animal. A crowd is a choice of uglinesses: the firstcomer is a scoundrel, and woman rhymes with human; yes, I have the spleen, complicated with melancholy, home-sickness, and a dash of hypochondria, and I rage, and I yawn, and I am killing myself, and I feel horribly dull."

"Silence, Big R," Bossuet remarked again, who was discussing a legal point with some chums, and was sunk to his waist in a sentence of judicial slang, of which the following is the end.

"For my part, although I am scarce an authority, and at the most an amateur lawyer, I assert this, that : according to the terms of the customs of Normandy, upon the Michaelmas day and in every year an equivalent must be paid to the Lord of the Manor, by all and singular, both by landowners and tenants, and that for every freehold, copyhold, allodium, mortgage——"

"Echo, plaintive nymph !" Grantaire hummed. Close to Grantaire, at an almost silent table, a quire of paper, an inkstand, and a pen between two small glasses announced that a farce was being sketched out. This great affair was discussed in a low voice, and the heads of the workers almost touched.

"Let us begin with the names, for when you have the names you have the plot."

"That is true : dictate, and I will write."

"Monsieur Dorimon ?"

"An annuitant ?"

"Of course. His daughter Celestine."

"——Tine. Who next ?"

"Colonel Sainval."

"Sainval is worn out. Say Valsin."

By the side of these theatrical aspirants another group, which also took advantage of the noise to talk low, were discussing a duel. An old student of thirty was advising a young man of eighteen, and explaining with what sort of adversary he had to deal.

"Hang it ! you will have to be careful, for he is a splendid swordsman. He can attack, makes no useless feints, has a strong wrist, brilliancy, and mathematical parries. And then he is left-handed."

In the corner opposite to Grantaire, Joly and Bahorel were playing at dominoes and talking of love affairs.

"You are happy," said Joly, "you have a mistress who is always laughing."



"It is a fault she commits," Bahorel answered; "a man's mistress does wrong to laugh, for it encourages him to deceive her, for seeing her gay saves you from remorse. If you see her sad you have scruples of conscience."

"Ungrateful man! a woman who laughs is so nice, and you never quarrel."

"That results from the treaty we made; on forming our little holy alliance, we gave each other a frontier which we never step beyond. Hence comes peace."

"Peace is digesting happiness."

"And you, Joly, how does your quarrel stand with Mamselle—you know whom I mean?"

"Oh, she still sulks with a cruel patience."

"And yet you are a lover of most touching thinness."

"Alas!"

"In your place, I would leave her."

"It's easy to say that."

"And to do. Is not her name Musichetta?"

"Yes, ah! my dear Bahorel, she is a superb girl, very literary, with little hands and feet, dresses with taste, is white and plump, and has eyes like a gipsy fortune-teller. I am wild about her."

In the third corner a poetical discussion was going on, and Pagan Mythology was quarrelling with Christian Mythology. The point was Olympus, whose defence Jean Prouvaire undertook through his romantic nature. Jean Prouvaire was only timid when in repose; once excited, he broke out in a species of gaiety, accentuated his enthusiasm, and he was at once laughing and lyrical.

"Let us not insult the gods," he said, "for perhaps they have not all departed, and Jupiter does not produce the effect of a dead man upon me. The gods are dreams, you say; well, even in nature such as it is at the present day, and after the flight of these dreams, we find again all the old Pagan myths. A mountain with the profile of a citadel, like the Vignemale, for instance, is still for me the headdress of Cybele. It has not yet been proved to me that Pan does not come at night to

whistle in the hollow trunks of the willows, while stopping their holes with his fingers in turn, and I have ever believed that he had some connection with the cascade of Pissevache.'

In the last corner politics were being discussed, and the Conceded Charter was pulled to pieces. Combeferre supported it feebly, while Courfeyrac attacked it energetically. There was on the table an unlucky copy of the *Charte Touquet*. Courfeyrac had seized it and was shaking it, mixing with his argument the rustling of this sheet of paper.

"In the first place, I do not want kings; even from the economic point of view alone, I do not want them, for a king is a parasite, and there are no gratis monarchs. Listen to this, kings are an expensive luxury. On the death of Francis I. the public debt of France was thirty thousand livres, on the death of Louis XIV. it was two milliards six hundred millions, at twenty-eight livres the marc, which in 1740 was equivalent, according to Desmarests, to four milliards five hundred millions, and at the present day would be equal to twelve milliards. In the second place, no offence to Combeferre, a conceded charter is a bad expedient of civilization, for saving the transaction, softening the passage, deadening the shock, making the nation pass insensibly from monarchy to democracy by the practice of constitutional fictions—all these are detestable fictions. No, no, let us never give the people a false light, and principles pine and grow pale in your constitutional cellar. No bastardizing, no compromise, no concession, from a king to people! In all these concessions there is an Article XIV., and by the side of the hand that gives is the claw that takes back again. I distinctly refuse your charter, for a charter is a mask, and there is falsehood behind it. A people that accepts a charter abdicates, and right is only right when entire. No charter then, I say."

It was winter time, and two logs were crackling on the hearth; this was tempting, and Courfeyrac did not resist. He crumpled up the poor *Charte Touquet* and

threw it in the fire—the paper blazed, and Combeferre philosophically watched the masterpiece of Louis XVIII. burning, contenting himself with saying,—

“The charter metamorphosed into flame.”

And sarcasms, sallies, jots, that French thing which is called *entrain*, that English thing which is called humour, good taste and bad, sound and unsound reasoning, all the rockets of dialogue, ascending together and crossing each other in all parts of the room, produced above their heads a species of merry explosion.

## CHAPTER V.

### ENLARGEMENT OF THE HORIZON.

THE collision of young minds has this admirable thing about it, that the spark can never be foreseen or the lightning divined. What will shoot forth presently? no one knows. The burst of laughter is heard, and at the next moment seriousness makes its entrance. A stern thought, which strangely issued from a clash of words, suddenly flashed through the medley in which Grantaire, Bahorel, Prouvaire, Bossuet, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac were blindly slashing and pointing. How is it that a phrase suddenly springs up in conversation, and underlines itself at once in the attention of those who trace it? as we have just said, no one knows. In the midst of the general confusion Bossuet concluded some remark he made to Combeferre with the date, “June 18, 1815, Waterloo.” At this name of Waterloo, Marius, who had been leaning over a glass of water, removed his hand from under his chin, and began looking intently at the company.

“Pardieu!” Courfeyrac exclaimed (*Parbleu* at this period was beginning to grow out of fashion). “That number eighteen is strange, and strikes me, for it is Bonaparte’s fatal number. Place Louis before and

Brumaire behind, and you have the man's whole destiny, with this expressive peculiarity, that the beginning has its heel gybed by the end."

Enjolras, who had hitherto been'dumb, now broke the silence, and said,—

"Courfeyrac, you mean that the crime is pressed by the expiation."

This word *crime* exceeded the measure which Marius, who was already greatly affected by this sudden reference to Waterloo, could accept. He rose, walked slowly to the map of France hanging on the wall, on the bottom of which could be seen an island in a separate compartment; he placed his finger on this and said,—

"Corsica, a small island, which made France very great."

This was the breath of frozen air; all broke off, for they felt that something was about to begin. Bahorel, who was assuming a victorious attitude in answering Bossuet, gave it up in order to listen; and Enjolras, whose blue eye was fixed on no one and seemed to be examining space, answered without looking at Marius,—

"France requires no Corsica to be great. France is great because she is France, *quia nominor leo*."

Marius felt no desire to give way; he turned to Enjolras, and his voice had a strange vibration, produced by his internal emotion.

"Heaven forbid that I should diminish France; but it is not diminishing her to amalgamate Napoleon with her. Come, let us talk, I am a newcomer among you, but I confess that you astonish me. Where are we? who are we? who are you? who am I? Let us come to an understanding about the Emperor. I hear you call him Buonaparte, laying a stress on the *u*, like the Royalists, but I must tell you that my grandfather does better still, for he says, 'Buonaparté.' I fancied you young men, but where do you keep your enthusiasm, and what do you do with it? whom do you admire, if it is not the Emperor? and what more do you want? if you will not have that great man, what great man would

you have? He had everything, he was complete, and in his brain was the cube of human faculties. He made codes like Justinian, and dictated like Cæsar; his conversation blended the lightning of Pascal with the thunder of Tacitus; he made history and wrote it, and his bulletins are Iliads; he combined the figures of Newton with the metaphor of Mahomet. He left behind him, in the East words great as the Pyramids, at Tilsit he taught majesty to Emperors, at the Academy of Sciences he answered Laplace, at the Council of State he held his own against Merlin, he gave a soul to the geometry of one and to the sophistry of others, for he was a legist with the lawyers, a sidereal with the astronomers. Like Cromwell, blowing out one of two candles, he went to the Temple to bargain for a curtain tassel; he saw everything, knew everything, but that did not prevent him from laughing a father's laugh by the cradle of his new-born son. And, all at once, startled Europe listened, armies set out, parks of artillery rolled along, bridges of boats were thrown over rivers, clouds of cavalry galloped in the hurricane, and shouts, bugles, and the crashing of thrones could be heard all around. The frontiers of kingdoms oscillated on the map, the sound of a superhuman sword being drawn from its scabbard could be heard, and he was seen standing erect on the horizon, with a gleam in his hand, and a splendour in his eyes, opening in the thunder his two wings, the grand army and the old Guard. He was the archangel of war."

All were silent, and Enjolras hung his head. Silence always produces to some extent the effect of acquiescence, or a species of setting the back against the wall. Marius, almost without drawing breath, continued with increased enthusiasm,—

"Let us be just, my friends! What a splendid destiny it is for a people to be the empire of such an Emperor, when that people is France and adds its genius to the genius of that man! To appear and reign; to march and triumph; to have as bivouacs every capital; to select grenadiers and make kings of them; to decree

the downfall of dynasties ; to transfigure Europe at double quick step ; to feel when you threaten that you lay your hand on the sword-hilt of God ; to follow in one man Hannibal, Cæsar, and Charlemagne ; to be the people of a ruler who accompanies your every daybreak with the brilliant announcement of a battle gained ; to be aroused in the morning by the guns of the Invalides ; to cast into the abysses of light prodigious words which are eternally luminous—Marengo, Arcola, Austerlitz, Jena, and Wagram !—to produce at each moment on the zenith of centuries constellations of victories ; to make the French Emperor a pendant of the Roman Empire ; to be the great nation, and give birth to the great army ; to send legions all over the world, as the mountain sends its eagles in all directions to conquer, rule, and crush ; to be in Europe a people gilt by glory ; to sound a Titanic flourish of trumpets through history ; to conquer the world twice, by conquest and by amazement—all this is sublime, and what is there greater ? ”

“ To be free,” said Combeferre.

Marius in his turn hung his head. This simple and cold remark had traversed his epical effusion like a steel blade, and he felt it fainting away within him. When he raised his eyes, Combeferre was no longer present ; probably satisfied with his reply to the apotheosis, he had left the room, and all, excepting Enjolras, had followed him. Enjolras, alone with Marius, was looking at him gravely. Marius, however, having slightly collected his ideas, did not confess himself defeated, and he was in all probability about to begin afresh upon Enjolras, when he suddenly heard some one singing on the staircase. It was Combeferre, and this is what he sung :—

“ Si César m'avait donné  
La gloire et la guerre,  
Et qu'il me fallût quitter  
L'amour de ma mère,  
Je dirais au grand César :  
Reprends ton sceptre et ton char,  
J'aime mieux ma mère, ô gué !  
J'aime mieux ma mère ! ”

The tender and solemn accent with which Combeferre sang this couplet imparted to it a species of strange grandeur. Marius, with his eye pensively fixed on the ceiling, repeated almost mechanically "my mother?"

At this moment he felt Enjolras's hand on his shoulder. "Citizen," he said to him, "my mother is the Republic."

## CHAPTER VI.

### RES ANGUSTA.

THIS evening left a sad obscurity and a profound shock in the mind of Marius, and he felt what the earth probably feels when it is opened by the plough-share, that the grain may be deposited; it only feels the wound, and the joy of giving birth does not arrive till later.

Marius was gloomy; he had only just made himself a faith, and must he reject it again? He declared to himself that he would not: he resolved not to doubt, and began doubting involuntarily. To stand between two religions, one of which you have not yet lost, and the other which you have not yet entered, is unendurable, and twilight only pleases bat-like souls. Marius had an open eyeball and wanted true light; and the semi-lustre of doubt hurt him. Whatever might be his desire to remain where he was and cling to it, he was invincibly constrained to continue, to advance, to think, to go further. Whither would this lead him? He feared lest, after taking so many steps which had drawn him near his father, he was now going to take steps which would carry him away from him. He left off going to the Café Musain.

In the troubled state of his conscience he did not think at all of certain serious sides of existence, but the realities of life will not allow themselves to be forgotten, and so they suddenly came to jog his memory. One morning the landlord came into Marius's room, and said to him,—

"Monsieur Courfeyrac recommended you?"

"Yes."

"But I want my money."

"Ask Courfeyrac to come and speak to me," said Marius.

When Courfeyrac arrived the landlord left them, and Marius told his friend what he had not dreamed of telling him yet—that he was, so to speak, alone in the world, and had no relations.

"What will become of you?" said Courfeyrac.

"I do not know," Marius answered.

"What do you intend doing?"

"I do not know."

"Have you any money?"

"Fifteen francs."

"Are you willing to borrow from me?"

"Never."

"Have you clothes?"

"There they are."

"Any jewelry?"

"A gold watch."

"I know a second-hand clothesman who will take your overcoat and a pair of trousers."

"Very good."

"You will only have a pair of trousers, a waistcoat, a hat, and coat left."

"And my boots."

"What? you will not go barefoot? what opulence!"

"That will be enough."

"I know a jeweller who will buy your watch."

"All right."

"No, it is not all right; what will you do after?"

"Anything I can that is honest."

"Do you know English?"

"No."

"Or German?"

"No."

"All the worse."

"Why so?"



"Because a friend of mine, a publisher, is preparing a sort of Encyclopedia, for which you could have translated English or German articles. The pay is bad, but it is possible to live on it."

"I will learn English and German."

"And in the meanwhile?"

"I will eat my clothes and my watch."

The clothes-dealer was sent for, and gave twenty francs for the coat and trousers; next they went to the jeweller's, who bought the watch for forty-five francs.

"That's not so bad," said Marius to Courfeyrac on returning to the hotel; "with my fifteen francs that makes eighty."

"And your bill here?" Courfeyrac observed.

"Oh, I forgot that," said Marius.

The landlord presented his bill, which Marius was bound to pay at once; it amounted to seventy francs.

"I have ten francs left," said Marius.

"The deuce," Courfeyrac replied; "you will spend five francs while learning English, and five while learning German. That will be swallowing a language very quickly, or a five-franc piece very slowly."

Aunt Gillenormand, who was not a bad-hearted woman in sad circumstances, discovered her nephew's abode; and one morning, when Marius returned from college, he found a letter from his aunt and the "sixty pistoles," that is to say, six hundred francs in gold, in a sealed-up box. Marius sent the thirty louis back to his aunt with a respectful note, in which he stated that he would be able in future to take care of himself—at that moment he had just three francs left. The aunt did not tell grandpa of this refusal, through fear of raising his exasperation to the highest pitch; besides, had he not said, "Never mention that blood-drinker's name in my presence." Marius quitted the Hotel of the Porte St. Jacques, as he did not wish to run into debt.

## BOOK V

### CHAPTER I.

#### MARIUS IS INDIGENT.

LIFE became severe for Marius: eating his clothes and his watch was nothing, but he also went through that indescribable course which is called "champing the bit." This is a horrible thing, which contains days without bread, nights without sleep, evenings without candle, a house without fire, weeks without work, a future without hope, a threadbare coat, an old hat at which the girls laugh, the door which you find locked at night because you have not paid your rent, the insolence of the porter and the eating-house keeper, the grins of neighbours, humiliations, dignity trampled under foot, disgust, bitterness, and desperation. Marius learnt how all this is devoured, and how it is often the only thing which a man has to eat. At that moment of life when a man requires pride because he requires love, he felt himself derided because he was meanly dressed, and ridiculous because he was poor. At the age when youth swells the heart with an imperial pride, he looked down more than once at his worn-out boots, and knew the unjust shame and burning blushes of wretchedness. It is an admirable and terrible trial from which the weak come forth infamous and the strong sublime. It is the crucible into which destiny throws a man whenever it wishes to have a scoundrel or a demi-god.

There was a time in Marius's life when he swept his own landing, when he bought a halfpenny-worth of Brie cheese of the fruiterer, when he waited till nightfall to go into the baker's and buy a loaf, which he carried

stealthily to his garret as if he had stolen it. At times there might have been seen slipping into the butcher's shop at the corner among the gossiping cooks who elbowed him, a young, awkward man with books under his arm, who had a timid and frightened air, who on entering removed his hat from his dripping forehead, made a deep bow to the astonished butcher's wife, another to the foreman, asked for a mutton-chop, paid three or four pence, wrapped the chop in paper, placed it between two books under his arm, and went away. It was Marius, and on this chop, which he cooked himself, he lived for three days. On the first day he ate the lean, on the second he ate the fat, and on the third he gnawed the bone. Several times did Aunt Gillenormand make tentatives and send him the sixty pistoles, but Marius always returned them, saying that he wanted for nothing.

Through all this he contrived to pass his examination. He was supposed to inhabit Courfeyrac's rooms, which were decent, and where a certain number of legal tomes, supported by broken-backed volumes of novels, represented the library prescribed by the regulations. He had his letters addressed to Courfeyrac's lodgings. When Marius was called to the bar he informed his grandfather of the fact in a cold letter, which, however, was full of submission and respect. M. Gillenormand took the letter with a trembling hand, read it, tore it in four parts, and threw them into the basket. Two or three days later, Mlle. Gillenormand heard her father, who was alone in his room, talking aloud, which always happened when he was agitated. She listened and heard the old gentleman say, "If you were not an ass, you would know that you cannot be at the same time a Baron and a lawyer."

## CHAPTER II.

### MARIUS POOR.

**It is the same with misery as with everything else—in the end it becomes possible, it assumes a shape. A man**

vegetates, that is to say, is developed in a certain poor way, which is, however, sufficient for life. This is the sort of existence which Marius Pontmercy had secured.

He had got out of the narrowest part, and the defile had grown slightly wider before him. By labour, courage, perseverance, and his will, he contrived to earn about seven hundred francs a year by his work. He had taught himself English and German, and, thanks to Courfeyrac, who introduced him to his friend the publisher, he filled the modest post of hack in his office. He wrote prospectuses, translated newspapers, annotated editions, compiled biographies, and one year with the other, his net receipts were seven hundred francs. He lived upon them—how? Not badly, as we shall show.

Marius occupied at No. 50-52 in the Gorbeau tenements for the annual rent of thirty francs, a garret without a fireplace, which was called a "cabinet," and only contained the indispensable articles of furniture, and this furniture was his own. He paid three francs a month to the old principal lodger for sweeping out his room, and bringing him every morning a little hot water, a new-laid egg, and a halfpenny roll. On this roll and egg he breakfasted, and the outlay varied from a penny to two pence, according as eggs were dear or cheap. At six in the evening, he went to the Rue St. Jacques to dine at Rousseau's, exactly opposite Basset's, the print-shop at the corner of the Rue des Mathurins. He did not eat soup, but he ordered a plate of meat for six sous, half a plate of vegetables for three sous, and dessert three sous. For three sous he had as much bread as he liked, and for wine, he drank water. On paying at the bar, where Madame Rousseau, at that period a fat and good-looking dame, was majestically enthroned, he gave a sou for the waiter and Madame Rousseau gave him a smile. Then he went away; for sixteen sous he had a smile and a dinner.

Thus, with breakfast four sous, dinner sixteen, his food cost him three hundred and sixty-five francs a year. Add thirty francs for rent and the thirty-six francs for the old woman, and a few minor expenses, and for four

hundred and fifty francs Marius was boarded, lodged, and served. His clothes cost him a hundred francs, his linen fifty, his washing fifty, but the whole did not exceed six hundred and fifty francs. He had fifty left, and was rich : at times he would lend ten francs to a friend, and Courfeyrac once actually borrowed sixty francs of him. As for firing, as Marius had no chimney, he " simplified " it. Marius always had two complete suits ; one old, for everyday wear, and the other new, for occasions, and both were black. He had but three shirts, one on, one in the drawer, and one at the wash, and he renewed them as they became worn out. As they were usually torn, he had a fashion of buttoning up his coat to the chin.

By the side of his father's name, another name was engraved on Marius's heart, that of Thénardier. Marius, in his grave and enthusiastic nature, enveloped in a species of glory the man to whom he owed his father's life, that intrepid sergeant who saved his colonel among the balls and bullets of Waterloo. He never separated the memory of this man from that of his father, and he associated them in his veneration : it was a species of shrine with two steps, the high altar for the Colonel, the low one for Thénardier. What doubled the tenderness of his gratitude was the thought of the misfortune into which he knew that Thénardier had fallen, and was swallowed up. Marius had learnt at Montfermeil the ruin and bankruptcy of the unfortunate landlord, and since then had made extraordinary efforts to find his trail, and try to reach him in the frightful abyss of misery through which Thénardier had disappeared. Marius went everywhere : he visited Chelles, Bondy, Gournay, Nogent, and Lagny ; and obstinately continued his search for three years, spending in these explorations the little money he saved. No one was able to give him the slightest information of Thénardier, and it was supposed he had gone to a foreign country. His creditors had sought him too, with less love, but quite as much perseverance, as Marius, and had been unable to lay hands on him. Marius accused and felt angry with himself for not succeeding in

his search ; it was the only debt the Colonel left him, and he felt bound in honour to pay it. "What," he thought "when my father lay dying on the battlefield, Thénardier contrived to find him in the midst of the smoke and grape-shot, and carried him off on his shoulders, although he owed him nothing, while I, who owe so much to Thénardier, am unable to come up with him in the shadow where he is dying of want, and in my turn bring him back from death to life. Oh, I will find him ! " In fact, Marius would have given one of his arms to find Thénardier, and his last drop of blood to save him from want ; and his sweetest and most magnificent dream was to see Thénardier, do him some service, and say to him, " You do not know me, but I know you : I am here, dispose of me as you please."

## CHAPTER III.

## MARIUS GROWS.

At this period Marius was twenty years of age, and he had left his grandfather's house for three. They remained on the same terms, without attempting a reconciliation or trying to meet. What good would it have been to meet ?—to come into collision again ? Which of them would have got the better ? Marius was the bronze vessel, but Father Gillenormand was the iron pot.

We are bound to say that Marius was mistaken as to his grandfather's heart ; he imagined that M. Gillenormand had never loved him, and that this sharp, harsh, laughing old gentleman, who cursed, shouted, stormed, and raised his cane, only felt for him at the most that light and severe affection of the Gerontes in the play. Marius was mistaken ; there are fathers who do not love their children ; but there is not a grandfather who does not adore his grandson. In his heart, as we said, M. Gillenormand idolized Marius : he idolized him, it is true, after his fashion, with an accompaniment of abuse and even of blows, but when the lad had disappeared he felt a black gap in his heart ; he insisted upon his

name not being mentioned, but regretted that he was so strictly obeyed. At the outset he hoped that this Buonapartist, this Jacobin, this terrorist, this Septembrizer, would return, but weeks passed, months passed, years passed, and, to the great despair of M. Gillenormand, the drinker of blood did not reappear. "I could not do otherwise, though, than turn him out," the grandfather said; and asked himself, "If it were to be done again, would I do it?" His pride at once answered, Yes, but his old head, which he silently shook, sorrowfully answered, No. He had his hours of depression, for he missed Marius, and old men require affection as much as they do the sun to warm them. However strong he might naturally be, the absence of Marius had changed something in him; for no consideration in the world would he have taken a step towards the "little scamp," but he suffered. He lived in greater retirement than ever at the Marais; he was still gay and violent as of yore, but his gaiety had a convulsive harshness, as if it contained grief and passion, and his violence generally terminated with a sort of gentle and sombre depression. He would say to himself at times—"Oh, if he were to come back, what a hearty box of the ears I would give him!"

As for the aunt, she thought too little to love much; to her Marius was only a black and vague profile, and in the end she paid much less attention to him than to the cat or the parrot which she probably had. What added to Father Gillenormand's secret suffering was that he shut it up within himself, and did not allow it to be divined. His chagrin was like one of those newly-invented furnaces which consume their own smoke. At times it happened that officious friends would speak to him about Marius, and ask, "How is your grandson, and what is he doing?" The old bourgeois would answer, with a sigh if he were sad, or with a flip to his frill if he wished to appear gay, "Baron Pontmercy is shabbily pleading in some county court."

While the old gentleman regretted, Marius applauded himself. As is the case with all good hearts, misfortune had freed him from bitterness; he thought of M. Gille-

normand gently, but he was resolved never to accept anything from a man *who had been unjust to his father*. This was the mitigated translation of his first indignation. Moreover, he was glad that he had suffered, and was still suffering, for he did so for his father. The hardness of his life satisfied and pleased him, and he said to himself with a sort of joy that *it was the least he could do*, and that it was an expiation; that, were it not so, he would have been punished, differently and hereafter, for his impious indifference toward his father, and such a father—that it would not have been just for his father to have all the suffering and he none; and, besides, what were his toil and want when compared with the Colonel's heroic life? Lastly, that his only way of approaching his father and resembling him, was to be valiant against indigence, as he had been brave against the enemy, and that this was doubtless what the Colonel meant by the words, *he will be worthy of it*—words which Marius continued to bear, not on his chest, as the Colonel's letter had disappeared, but in his heart.

And then, again, on the day when his grandfather turned him out, he was only a boy, while now he was a man and felt he was so. Misery, we lay a stress on the fact, had been kind to him, for poverty in youth, when it succeeds, has the magnificent result of turning the whole will to effort, and the whole soul to aspiration. Poverty at once lays bare material life, and renders it hideous; and hence come indescribable soarings toward the ideal life. The rich young man has a thousand brilliant and coarse amusements—races, shooting, dogs, tobacco, gambling, good dinners, and so on, which are occupations of the lower part of the mind at the expense of the higher and more delicate part. The poor young man has to work for his bread, and when he has eaten, he has only reverie left him. He goes to the gratis spectacles which God gives him; he looks at the sky, space, the stars, the flowers, the children, the humanity in which he is suffering, and the creation in which he radiates. He looks so much at humanity that he sees the soul, and so much at creation, that he sees God.



It was evident that for such a generous and energetic nature as his, this could only be a transitional state, and that at the first collision with the inevitable complications of destiny Marius would wake up. In the meanwhile, though, he was called to the bar, and whatever Father Gillenormand might think, he did not practise, for reverie had turned him away from oratory. It was a bore to flatter attorneys, attend regularly at the palace and seek for briefs. And why should he do so? He saw no reason to change his means of existence; his obscure task was certain, he had but little labour over it, and, as we have explained, he considered his income satisfactory. One of the publishers for whom he worked, M. Magimel, I think, offered to take him into his house, lodge him comfortably, find him regular work, and pay him one thousand five hundred francs a year. To be comfortably lodged and have one thousand five hundred francs a year! Doubtless agreeable things, but then, to resign his liberty, to be a hired servant, a sort of literary clerk! In the opinion of Marius, if he accepted, his position would become better and worse; he would gain comfort and lose dignity; he would exchange a complete and fine misfortune for an ugly and ridiculous constraint; it would be something like a blind man who became one-eyed. So he declined the offer.

Marius lived in solitude; through the inclination he had to remain outside everything, and also through the commotion he had undergone, he held aloof from the society presided over by Enjolras. They remained excellent friends, and ready to help each other when the opportunity offered, but nothing more. Marius had two friends, one, young Courfeyrac, the other, old M. Mabœuf, and he inclined to the latter. In the first place, he owed to him the revolution which had taken place in him, and his knowledge and love of his father: "He operated on me for the cataract," he would say. Certainly this churchwarden had been decisive: but for all that, M. Mabœuf had only been in this affair the calm and impassive agent of Providence. He had enlightened Marius accidentally

and unconsciously, just as a candle does which some one brings into a room, but he had been the candle, and not the same one. As for the internal political revolution which had taken place in Marius, M. Mabœuf was entirely incapable of understanding, wishing, or deserving it. As we shall meet M. Mabœuf again, hereafter, a few remarks about him will not be thrown away

---

## CHAPTER IV.

### M. MABŒUF.

ON the day when M. Mabœuf said to Marius, "I certainly approve of political opinions," he expressed the real state of his mind. All political opinions were a matter of indifference to him, and he approved of them all without distinction, that they might leave him at peace, just as the Greeks called the Furies the lovely, the kind, the exquisite, the Eumenides. M. Mabœuf's political opinion was to love plants passionately, and books even more. He possessed, like everybody else, his termination in *ist*, without which no one could have lived at that day, but he was neither Royalist, Bonapartist, Chartist, Orleanist, nor Anarchist—he was a botanist.

He did not understand how men could come to hate each other for trifles like the Charter, democracy, legitimacy, monarchy, the republic, etc., when there were in the world all sorts of mosses, grasses, and plants which they could look at, and piles of folios, and even 32mos, whose pages they could turn over. He was very careful not to be useless: his having books did not prevent him reading them, and being a botanist did not prevent him being a gardener. When he knew Colonel Pontmercy, there was this sympathy between them, that the Colonel did for flowers what he did for fruits. M. Mabœuf had succeeded in producing pears as sweet as those of St. Germain; it is one of those combinations from which sprang, as it seems, the autumn Mirabelle plum, which is still celebrated, and no less perfumed than the summer

one. He attended mass more through gentleness than devotion, and because, while he loved men's faces but hated their noise, he found them at church congregated and silent. Feeling that he must hold some position in the State, he selected that of churchwarden. He had never succeeded in loving any woman so much as a tulip bulb, or any man so much as an Elzevir. He had long passed his sixtieth year, when some one asked him one day, "How is it that you never married?" "I forgot it," he said. When he happened to say—and to whom does it not happen?—"Oh, if I were rich!" it was not when ogling a pretty girl, like Father Gillenormand, but when contemplating a quarto. He lived alone with an old housekeeper; he was rather gouty, and when he slept, his old chalk-stoned fingers formed an arch in the folds of the sheets. He had written and published a "Flora of the Environs of Caunteretz," with coloured plates, a work of some merit, of which he possessed the plates, and sold it himself. People rang at his door in the Rue Mézières two or three times a day to buy a copy; he made a profit of about two thousand francs a year by the book, and that was nearly his whole fortune. Although poor, he had contrived by patience and privations, and with time, to form a valuable collection of all sorts of rare examples. He never went out without a book under his arm, and frequently returned with two. The sole ornaments of his four rooms on the ground-floor, which, with a small garden, formed his lodging, were herbals and engravings by old masters.

M. Mabœuf had taken a fancy to Marius, because the young man, being young and gentle, warmed his old age without startling his timidity. Youth, combined with gentleness, produces on aged people the effect of sun without wind. When Marius was saturated with military glory, gunpowder, marches and counter-marches, and all the prodigious battles in which his father gave and received such mighty sabre cuts, he went to see M. Mabœuf, who talked to him about the hero in his connection with flowers.

About the year 1830 his brother the curé died, and

almost immediately after, as when night arrives, the entire horizon became dark for M. Mabœuf. The bankruptcy of a notary despoiled him of ten thousand francs, all he possessed of his brother's capital and his own, while the revolution of July produced a crisis in the book trade. In times of pressure the first thing which does not sell is a *Flora*, and that of the Environs of Caunteretz stopped dead. Weeks passed without a purchaser. At times M. Mabœuf started at the sound of the house bell, but Mother Plutarch—the name by which he called his maid-servant—would say to him sadly, "It is the water-carrier, sir." In a word, M. Mabœuf left the Rue Mézières one day, abdicated his office as churchwarden, gave up St. Sulpice, sold a portion, not of his books, but of his engravings, for which he cared least, and installed himself in a small house on the Boulevard Montparnasse, where, however, he only remained three months, for two reasons—in the first place, the ground-floor and garden cost three hundred francs, and he did not dare set aside more than two hundred francs for rent; and secondly, as he was close to the Faton shooting-gallery, he heard pistol-shots, which he could not endure. He carried off his *Flora*, his copperplates, his herbals, portfolios, and books, and settled down near the Salpêtrière, in a sort of hut, in the village of Austerlitz, where he rented for fifty crowns a year three rooms, a garden enclosed by a hedge, and a well. He took advantage of this removal to sell nearly all his furniture. On the day when he entered his new house he was in very good spirits, and drove in with his own hands the nails on which to hang the engravings; he dug in his garden for the rest of the day, and at night, seeing that Mother Plutarch had an anxious look and was thoughtful, he tapped her on the shoulder and said with a smile, "We have the indigo." Only two visitors, the publisher and Marius, were allowed admission to his hut of Austerlitz, a rackets name, by the way, which was most disagreeable to him.

M. Mabœuf had innocent pleasures, which cost but little and were unexpected, and the slightest accident

supplied him with them. One day Mother Plutarch was reading a novel in the corner of the room; she was reading aloud, for she fancied that she understood better in that way. There are some persons who read very loud, and look as if they were pledging themselves their word of honour about what they are reading. Mother Plutarch read her novel with an energy of this nature, and M. Mabœuf listened to her without hearing. While reading, Madame Plutarch came to the following passage, relating to a bold dragoon and a gushing young lady,—

“ *La belle bouda* (pouted), *et Le Dragon* (Dragoon)——”

Here she broke off to wipe her spectacles.

“ Bouddha and the dragon,” M. Mabœuf repeated in a low voice; “ yes, that is true; there was a dragon, which lived in a cavern, belched flames, and set fire to the sky. Several stars had already been burnt up by this monster, which had tiger claws, by-the-bye, when Bouddha went into its den and succeeded in converting the dragon. That is an excellent book you are reading, Mother Plutarch, and there cannot be a finer legend.” And M. Mabœuf fell into a delicious reverie.

Marius felt a liking for this candid old man, who saw himself slowly assailed by poverty and yet was not depressed by it. Marius met Courfeyrac and sought M. Mabœuf—very rarely, however,—once or twice a month at the most. Marius’s delight was to take long walks alone, either on the external boulevards at the Champ de Mars, or in the least frequented walks of the Luxembourg. He often spent half a day in looking at a kitchen garden, the patches of luttuce, the fowls on the dung-heap, and the horse turning the mill-wheel. Passers-by looked at him with surprise, and some thought his dress suspicious and his face dangerous, while it was only a poor young man thinking without an object. It was in one of these walks that he discovered the Maison Gorbeau, and the isolation and the cheapness tempting him, he took a room there. He was only known by the name of M. Marius.

Some of his father’s old generals and old comrades invited him to come and see them, when they knew him, and

Marius did not refuse, for they were opportunities to speak about his father. He called thus from time to time upon Count Pajol, General Bellavesne, and General Frérion at the Invalides. There were generally music and dancing, and on such evenings Marius put on his best suit; but he never went to such parties except on days when it was freezing tremendously hard, for he could not pay for a vehicle, and he would not go unless his boots were like looking-glasses. He would say at times, though not at all bitterly, "Men are so constituted that in a drawing-room you may have mud everywhere except on your boots. In order to give you a proper reception only one irreproachable thing is expected from you—is it your conscience? no, your boots."

All passions, saving those of the heart, are dissipated in reverie. The political fever of Marius had vanished, and the revolution of 1830 had aided in this, by satisfying and calming him. He had remained the same, except in his passion; he still held the same opinions, but they were softened down. Properly speaking, he no longer had opinions but sympathies; to what party did he belong? to that of humanity. For humanity he selected France; in the nation he chose the people; and in the people, woman, and his pity was mainly given to her. At the present time, he preferred an idea to a fact, a poet to a hero, and he admired a book like Job even more than an event like Marengo; and when after a day of meditation he returned along the boulevard and saw through the trees the illimitable space, the nameless gleams, the abyss, shadow, and mystery, all that was only human seemed to him infinitely little. He believed that he had—and probably he had—reached the truth of life and of human philosophy, and he ended by gazing at nothing but the sky, the only thing which truth can see from the bottom of her well.

About the middle of the year 1831 the old woman who waited on Marius told him that his neighbours, the wretched Jondrette family, were going to be turned out. Marius, who spent nearly his whole time out of doors, scarce knew that he had neighbours.

"Why are they turned out?" he asked.

"Because they do not pay their rent, and owe two quarters."

"How much is it?"

"Twenty francs," said the old woman.

Marius had thirty francs in reserve in a drawer.

"Here are twenty-five francs," he said to the woman, "pay the rent of the poor people, give them five francs, and do not tell them where the money comes from."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE SUBSTITUTE.

ACCIDENT decreed that the regiment to which Theodule belonged should be quartered in Paris. This was an opportunity for Aunt Gillenormand to have a second idea; her first one had been to set Theodule watching Marius, and she now plotted to make him succeed him. In the event of the grandfather feeling a vague want for a youthful face in the house—for such rays of dawn are sometimes sweet to ruins—it was expedient to find another Marius. "Well," she thought, "it is only a simple erratum, such as I notice in books, for *Marius* read *Theodule*. A grand-nephew is much the same as a grandson after all, and in default of a barrister you can take a lancer."

One morning when M. Gillenormand was going to read something like the *Quotidienne*, his daughter came in and said in her softest voice, for the interests of her favourite were at stake,—

"Papa, Theodule is coming this morning to pay his respects to you."

"Who's Theodule?"

"Your grand-nephew."

"Ah!" said the old gentleman.

Then he began reading, thought no more of the grand-nephew, who was only some Theodule, and soon became angry, which nearly always happened when he read. The

paper he held, a Royalist one, we need hardly say, announced for the morrow, without any anxiety, one of the daily events of Paris at that day. "The pupils of the schools of law and medicine were going to assemble in the Pantheon Square—to deliberate." The affair was one of the questions of the moment, the artillery of the National Guard, and a conflict between the war minister and the "Citizen Militia," on the subject of guns parked in the courtyard of the Louvre. The students were going to "deliberate" on this, and it did not require much more to render M. Gillenormand furious. He thought of Marius, who was a student, and who would probably go, like the others, "to deliberate at midday in the Pantheon Square."

While he was making these painful reflections Lieutenant Theodule came in, dressed in mufti, which was clever, and was discreetly introduced by Mlle. Gillenormand. The lancer had reasoned thus: "The old Druid has not sunk all his money in annuities, and so it is worth the while to disguise oneself as a *pékin* now and then." Mlle. Gillenormand said aloud to her father,—

"Theodule, your grand-nephew."

And in a whisper to the lieutenant,—

"Assent to everything."

And retired.

The lieutenant, but little accustomed to such venerable meetings, stammered, with some timidity, "Good morning, uncle," and gave a bow which was half a military salute and half a reverence.

"Ah, it's you! very good, sit down," said the ancestor, and after saying this he utterly forgot the lancer. Theodule sat down, and M. Gillenormand got up. He began walking up and down the room, with his hands in his pockets, talking aloud, and feeling with his old, irritated fingers the two watches which he wore in his two fobs.

"That heap of scamps! so they are going to meet in the Pantheon Square! *Vertu de ma mie!* little ragamuffins who were at nurse yesterday! if you were to squeeze their noses the milk would run out! And they are going to deliberate to-morrow! Where are we going? where



are we going? it is clear that we are going to the abyss, and the descamisados have led us to it. The citizen artillery! deliberate about the citizen artillery! go and chatter in the open air about the squibs of the National Guard! and whom will they meet there? Just let us see to what Jacobinism leads. I will wager whatever you like, a million against a counter, that there will be only liberated convicts and pickpockets there, for the Republicans and the galley-slaves are like one nose and one handkerchief. Carnot used to say, 'Where do you want me to go, traitor?' and Fouché answered, 'Wherever you like, imbecile!' That is what the Republicans are."

"That is true," said Theodule.

M. Gillenormand half turned his head, saw Theodule, and went on,—

"And then to think that that scamp had the villainy to become a Republican! why did you leave my house to become a Republican? Pest! in the first place, the people do not want your republic, for they are sensible, and know very well that there always have been kings, and always will be, and they know, after all, that the people are only the people, and they laugh at your republic, do you hear, Cretin? Is not such a caprice horrible? to fall in love with Père Duchesne, to ogle the guillotine, to sing romances, and play the guitar under the balcony of '93—why, all these young men ought to be spat upon, for they are so stupid! They are all caught, and not one escapes, and they need only inhale the air of the streets to go mad. The nineteenth century is poison; the first comer lets his goat's beard grow, believes himself a scoundrel for the truth, and bolts from his old parents, for that is republican, it is romantic; just be good enough to tell me what that word romantic means?—every folly possible. A year ago they went to see *Hernani*. Just let me ask you, *Hernani*! antitheses, abominations, which are not even written in French. And then there are cannon in the courtyard of the Louvre; such is the brigandage of the present age."

"You are right, uncle," said Theodule.

M. Gillenormand continued,—

"Guns in the courtyard of the Museum! what to do? Cannon, what do you want of me? do you wish to fire grapeshot at the Apollo Belvedere? What have cartridges to do with the Venus de Medici? Oh! the young men of the present day are ragamuffins, and this Benjamin Constant is not much. And those who are not villains are gawkies! they do all they can to make themselves ugly—they dress badly, they are afraid of women, and they have an air of begging round petticoats, which makes the girls laugh; on my word of honour, they look as if ashamed mendicants of love. They are deformed, and perfect it by being stupid; they repeat the jokes of Tiercelin and Potier; they wear sack-coats, hostlers' waistcoats, trousers of coarse cloth, boots of coarse leather, and their chatter resembles their plumage—their jargon might be employed to sole their boots. And all these silly lads have political opinions, and it ought to be strictly prohibited. They manufacture systems, they remodel society, they demolish the monarchy, upset all laws, put the garret in the place of the cellar, and my porter in the place of the king; they upset Europe from one end to the other, build up the world again, and their amours consist in looking sheepishly at the legs of the washerwomen as they get into their carts. Ah, Marius! ah, scoundrel! to go and vociferate in the public square! to discuss, debate, and form measures—they call them measures. Great gods! why, disorder is decreasing and becoming silly. I have seen chaos, and I now see a puddle. Scholars deliberating about the National Guard! why, that could not be seen among the Ojibways or the Cacodaches! The savages who go about naked, with their noddles dressed like a racket-bat, and with a club in their paw, are less of brutes than these bachelors, twopenny-halfpenny brats, who dare to decree and order, deliberate and argue! Why, it is the end of the world; it is evidently the end of this wretched globe; it wanted a final shove, and France has given it. Deliberate, my scamps! These things will happen so long as they go to read the papers under the arcades of the Odeon; it costs them a halfpenny, and

their common sense, and their intelligence, and their heart, and their soul, and their mind. They leave that place, and then bolt from their family. All the newspapers are poison, even the *Drapeau Blanc*! and Martainville was a Jacobin at heart. Ah, just Heaven! you can boast of having rendered your grandfather desperate!"

"That is quite plain," said Theodule.

And taking advantage of the moment, during which M. Gillenormand was recovering breath, the lancer added magisterially,—

"There ought to be no other paper but the *Moniteur*, and no other book but the Army List."

M. Gillenormand went on,—

"It is just like their Sièyes! a regicide who became a senator! for they always end with that. They scar themselves with the citizen, so that they may be called in the long run Monsieur le Comte —, Monsieur le Comte, as long as the arm of the slaughterers of September. The philosopher Sièyes! I do myself the justice of saying that I never cared any more for the philosophy of all these philosophers than I did for the spectacles of the grimacers at Tivoli. One day I saw the Senators pass along the Quai Malaquais, in violet velvet cloaks studded with bees, and wearing Henri IV. hats; they were hideous, and looked like the apes of the tigers' court. Citizens, I declare to you that your progress is a madness, that your humanity is a dream, that your Revolution is a crime, that your Republic is a monster, that your young Virgin France emerges from a brothel, and I sustain it against you all. No matter whether you are journalists, social economists, lawyers, and greater connoisseurs of liberty, equality, and fraternity, than the cut-throat of the guillotine! I tell you this plainly, my good fellows."

"Parbleu!" the lieutenant cried, "that is admirably true!"

M. Gillenormand interrupted a gesture which he had begun, turned round, gazed intently at Theodule the lancer between the eyes, and said to him,—

"You are an ass."

## BOOK VI.

### CHAPTER I.

#### LUX FACTA EST.

MARIUS at this period was a handsome young man of middle height, with very black hair, a lofty and intelligent forehead, open and impassioned nostrils, a sincere and calm air, and something haughty, pensive, and innocent was spread over his whole face. His profile, in which all the lines were rounded without ceasing to be firm, had that Germanic gentleness which entered France through Alsace and Lorraine, and that absence of angles which renders it so easy to recognize the Sicambri among the Romans, and distinguishes the leonine from the aquiline race. He had reached the season of life when the mind of man is composed of depth and simplicity in nearly equal proportions. A serious situation being given, he had all that was necessary to be stupid, but, with one more turn of the screw, he could be sublime. His manner was reserved, cold, polite, and unexpansive; but, as his mouth was beautiful, his lips bright vermilion, and his teeth the whitest in the world, his smile corrected any severity in his countenance. At certain moments, this chaste forehead and voluptuous smile offered a strange contrast.

Courfeyrac, when he met him, would say, "Good-morning, Abbé." When Courfeyrac had made any remark of this nature, Marius for a whole week would shun women, young and old, more than ever, and Courfeyrac in the bargain. There were, however, in the

whole immense creation, two women whom Marius did not shun, or to whom he paid no attention. To tell the truth, he would have been greatly surprised had any one told him that they were women. One was the fairy-faced old woman who swept his room, and induced Courfeyrac to remark, "Seeing that his servant wears her beard, Marius does not wear his ;" the other was a young girl whom he saw very frequently and did not look at. For more than a year Marius had noticed in a deserted walk of the Luxembourg, the one which is bordered by the Parapet de la Pepinière, a man and a very young lady nearly always seated side by side at the most solitary end of the walk, near the Rue de l'Ouest. Whenever that accident, which mingles with the promenades of people whose eye is turned inwards, led Marius to this walk, and that was nearly daily, he met this couple again. The man seemed to be about sixty years of age ; he appeared sad and serious, and the whole of his person offered the robust and fatigued appearance of military men who have retired from service. If he had worn a decoration, Marius would have said, "He is an old officer." He looked kind, but unapproachable, and never fixed his eye on that of another person. He wore blue trousers, a coat of the same colour, and a broad-brimmed hat, all of which were constantly new, a black cravat, and a quaker's, that is to say, dazzlingly white, but very coarse shirt. A grisette who passed him one day said, "What a clean old widower." His hair was very white.

The first time that the young lady who accompanied him sat down with him upon the bench, which they seemed to have adopted, she was about thirteen or fourteen, so thin as to be almost ugly, awkward, insignificant, and promising to have perhaps very fine eyes some day ; still they were always raised to the old gentleman with a species of displeasing assurance. She wore the garb, at once old and childish, of boarders at a convent—a badly-cut dress of coarse black merino. They looked like father and daughter. Marius examined for two or three days the old man, who was not yet aged, and this little

girl, who was not yet a maiden, and then paid no further attention to them. They, on their side, seemed not even to see him, and talked together with a peaceful and careless air. The girl talked incessantly and gaily, the old man spoke but little, and at times he fixed upon her eyes filled with ineffable paternity. Marius had formed the mechanical habit of walking in this alley, and invariably found them there. This is how matters went on :—

In the second year, just at the point of our story which the reader has now reached, it happened that Marius broke off his daily walk in the Luxembourg, without exactly knowing why, and was nearly six months without setting foot in the garden. One day, however, he returned to it; it was a beauteous summer's day, and Marius was joyous as men are when the weather is fine. He felt as if he had in his heart all the birds' songs that he heard, and all the patches of blue sky, of which he caught a glimpse between the leaves. He went straight to "his" walk, and when he reached the end he noticed the well-known couple seated on the same bench; but when he drew near he found that, while it was the same man, it did not seem to be the same girl. The person he now saw was a tall and lovely creature, possessing the charming outlines of the woman, at the precise moment when they are still combined with the most simple graces of the child—a fugitive and gracious moment which can alone be rendered by the two words "fifteen years." He saw admirable auburn hair, tinted with gilt veins, a forehead that seemed made of marble, cheeks that seemed made of a rose-leaf, and of a pale carnation hue, an exquisite mouth, from which a smile issued like a flash, and words like music, and a head which Raffaele would have given to a Virgin, set upon a neck which Goujon would have given to a Venus. And, that nothing might be wanting in this ravishing face, the nose was not beautiful, but pretty, neither straight nor bent, neither Italian nor Greek, it was the Parisian nose, that is to say, something witty, fine, irregular, and pure, which is the despair of painters and the charm of poets.

And then she was no longer the boarding-school Miss, with her plush bonnet, merino dress, thick shoes, and red hands; taste had come to her with beauty, and she was well dressed, with a species of simple, rich, and unaffected elegance. She wore a black brocade dress, a cloak of the same material, and a white crape bonnet; her white gloves displayed the elegance of her hand, which was playing with the ivory handle of a parasol, and her satin boot revealed the smallness of her foot; when you passed her, her whole toilette exhaled a youthful and penetrating perfume. As for the man, he was still the same. The second time that Marius passed, the girl raised her eyelids, and he could see that her eyes were of a deep cerulean blue, but in this veiled azure there was only the glance of a child. She looked at Marius carelessly, as she would have looked at the child playing under the sycamores, or the marble vase that threw a shadow over the bench; and Marius continued his walk, thinking of something else. He passed the bench four or five times, but did not once turn his eyes toward the young lady. On the following days he returned as usual to the Luxembourg; as usual he found the "father and daughter" there, but he paid no further attention to them. He thought no more of the girl now that she was lovely than he had done when she was ugly, and though he always passed very close to the bench on which she was sitting, it was solely the result of habit.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE EFFECT OF SPRING.

ONE day the air was warm, the Luxembourg was inundated with light and shade, the sky was as pure as if the angels had washed it that morning, the sparrows were twittering shrilly in the foliage of the chestnut trees, and Marius opened his whole soul to nature. He was thinking of nothing, he loved and breathed, he passed by the

bench, the young lady raised her eyes to him, and their two glances met. What was there this time in her look? Marius could not have said,—there was nothing and there was everything, it was a strange flash. She let her eyes fall, and he continued his walk. What he had just seen was not the simple and ingenuous eye of a child, but a mysterious gulf, the mouth of which had opened and then suddenly closed again. There is a day on which every maiden looks in this way, and woe to the man on whom her glance falls!

On returning to his garret in the evening, Marius took a glance at his clothes, and perceived for the first time that he had been guilty of the extraordinary impropriety and stupidity of walking in the Luxembourg in his "every-day dress," that is to say, with a broken-brimmed hat, clumsy boots, black trousers, white at the knees, and a black coat pale at the elbows. The next day, at the accustomed hour, Marius took out of the drawers his new coat, his new trousers, his new hat, and his new boots; he dressed himself in this complete panoply, put on gloves, an extraordinary luxury, and went off to the Luxembourg. On the road he met Courfeyrac, and pretended not to see him. Courfeyrac on reaching home said to his friend,—

"I have just met Marius's new hat and new coat, and Marius inside them. He was going, I fancy, to pass some examination, for he looked so stupid."

On reaching the Luxembourg, Marius walked round the basin and gazed at the swans; then he stood for a long time contemplating a statue all black and mould, and which had lost one hip. Near the basin was a comfortable bourgeois of about forty, holding by the hand a little boy, and saying to him, "Avoid all excesses, my son; keep at an equal distance from despotism and anarchy." Marius listened to this bourgeois, then walked once again round the basin, and at length proceeded toward "his" walk slowly, and as if regretfully. He seemed to be at once forced and prevented from going, but he did not explain this to himself, and fancied he was behaving



as he did every day. On turning into the walk he saw M. Leblanc and the young lady at the other end, seated on "their" bench. He buttoned up his coat to the top, pulled it down so that it should make no creases, examined with some complacency the lustre of his trousers, and marched upon the bench. There was attack in this march, and assuredly a desire for conquest, and hence I say that he marched upon this bench, as I would say Hannibal marched on Rome.

He reached the opposite end, then returned, and this time approached a little nearer to the bench. He even got within the distance of three trees, but then he felt an impossibility of going further, and hesitated. He fancied he could see the young lady's face turned toward him; however, he made a masculine, violent effort, subdued his hesitation, and continued to advance. A few moments after he passed in front of the bench, upright and firm, but red up to the ears, and not daring to take a glance either to the right or left, and with his hand thrust into his coat like a statesman. At the moment when he passed under the guns of the fort he felt his heart beat violently. She was dressed as of the previous day, and he heard an ineffable voice which must "be her voice." She was talking quietly, and was very beautiful; he felt it, though he did not attempt to look at her, "and yet," he thought, "she could not fail to have esteem and consideration for me if she knew that I am the real author of the dissertation on Marcos Obregon de la Ronda, which M. François de Neufchateau appropriated, and made a preface to his edition of *Gil Blas*."

He passed the bench, went to the end of the walk which was close by, then turned, and again passed the young lady. This time he was very pale, and his feelings were most disagreeable. He went away from the bench and the maiden, and while turning his back, he fancied that she was looking at him, and this made him totter. He did not again attempt to pass the bench; he stopped at about the middle of the walk and then sat down, a most unusual thing for him, taking side glances,

and thinking in the innermost depths of his mind that after all it was difficult for a person whose white bonnet and black dress he admired to be absolutely insensible to his showy trousers and new coat. At the end of a quarter of an hour he rose, as if about to walk toward this bench which was surrounded by a glory, but he remained motionless. For the first time in fifteen months he said to himself that the gentleman who sat there daily with his daughter must have noticed him, and probably considered his assiduity strange. For the first time, too, he felt it was rather irreverent to designate this stranger, even in his own thoughts, by the nickname of M. Leblanc.

He remained thus for some minutes with hanging head, making sketches in the sand with the stick he held in his hand. Then he suddenly turned in the direction opposed to the bench and went home. That day he forgot to go to dinner; he noticed the fact at eight in the evening, and, as it was too late to go to the Rue St. Jacques, he ate a lump of bread. He did not go to bed till he had brushed and carefully folded up his coat.

### CHAPTER III.

#### MAIME BOUGON IS THUNDERSTRUCK.

THE next day, Maime Bougon—it was thus that Courfeyrac called the old portress, principal lodger, and charwoman, of No. 50-52, though her real name was Madame Bourgon, as we have stated, but that scamp of a Courfeyrac respected nothing—Maime Bourgon, to her stupefaction, noticed that Marius again went out in his best coat. He returned to the Luxembourg, but did not go beyond his half-way bench; he sat down there, as on the previous day, regarding from a distance, and seeing distinctly, the white bonnet, the black dress, and, above all, the blue radiance. He did not move or return home till the gates of the Luxembourg were closed. He did not see M. Leblanc and his daughter go away, and

hence concluded that they left the garden by the gate in the Rue de l'Ouest. Some weeks after, when reflecting on the subject, he could never remember where he dined that day. On the next day, the third, Mame Bougon received another thunderstroke: Marius went out in his new coat. "Three days running!" she exclaimed. She tried to follow him, but Marius walked quickly, and with immense strides; it was a hippopotamus attempting to catch up a chamois. She lost him out of sight in two minutes, and went back panting, three parts choked by her asthma, and furious. "What sense is there," she growled, "in putting on one's best coat every day, and making people run like that!"

Marius had gone to the Luxembourg, where M. Leblanc and the young lady were already. Marius approached as near to them as he could, while pretending to read his book, though still a long distance off, and then sat down on his bench, where he spent four hours in watching the sparrows, which he fancied were ridiculing him, hopping about in the walk. A fortnight passed in this way; Marius no longer went to the Luxembourg to walk, but always to sit down at the same spot, without knowing why. He every morning put on his new coat, although he did not show himself, and began again on the morrow. She was, decidedly, marvellously beautiful; the sole remark resembling a criticism that could be made was, that the contradiction between her glance, which was sad, and her smile, which was joyous, gave her face a slightly startled look, which at times caused this gentle face to become strange without ceasing to be charming.

On one of the last days of the second week, Marius was as usual seated on his bench holding in his hand an open book in which he had not turned a page for several months, when he suddenly started—an event was occurring at the end of the walk. M. Leblanc had left their bench, the girl was holding her father's arm, and both were proceeding slowly toward the middle of the walk where Marius was. He shut his book, then opened it again and tried to read, but he trembled, and the glory

came straight toward him. "Oh, heaven!" he thought, "I shall not have the time to throw myself into an attitude." The white-haired man and the girl, however, advanced; it seemed to him as if this endured a century, and was only a second. "What do they want here?" he asked himself. "What! she is going to pass here; her feet will tread this sand, this walk, two paces from me?" He was quite upset; he would have liked to have been very handsome, and have the cross. He heard the soft measured sound of their footsteps approaching him, and he imagined that M. Leblanc was taking a wry glance at him. "Is this gentleman going to speak to me?" he thought. He hung his head, and when he raised it again they were close to him. The girl passed, and in passing looked at him—looked at him intently, with a thoughtful gentleness which made Marius shudder from head to foot. It seemed to him as if she reproached him for keeping away from her so long, and was saying, "I have come instead." Marius was dazzled by these eyeballs full of beams and abysses. He felt that his brain was on fire. She had come toward him, what joy! and then, she had looked at him. She appeared to him lovelier than she had ever been, lovely with a beauty at once feminine and angelic, a perfect beauty, which would have made Petrarch sing and Dante kneel. He felt as if he were floating in the blue sky, but, at the same time, he was horribly annoyed because he had dust on his boots, and he felt sure that she had looked at his boots too.

He looked after her till she disappeared, and then walked about the garden like a maniac. He probably at times laughed to himself and talked aloud. He was so thoughtful among the nurse girls that each of them fancied him in love with her. He met Courfeyrac under the arches of the Pantheon, and said to him, "Come and dine with me." They went to Rousseau's and spent six francs. Marius ate like an ogre, and gave six sous to the waiter. After dinner he said to Courfeyrac, "Have you read the papers? what a fine speech Audry de Puyraveau made!" He was distractedly in love.

He then said to Courfeyrac, "Let us go to the theatre—I'll pay." They went to the Porte St. Martin to see Frederick in the "Auberge des Adrets," and Marius was mightily amused. At the same time he became more virtuous than ever. On leaving the theatre he refused to look at the garter of a dressmaker who was striding across a gutter, and Courfeyrac happening to say, "I should like to place that woman in my collection," he almost felt horrified. Courfeyrac invited him to breakfast next morning at the Café Voltaire. He went there, and ate even more than on the previous day. He was thoughtful and very gay, and seemed to take every opportunity to laugh noisily. A party of students collected round the table and spoke of the absurdities paid for by the State, which are produced from the pulpit of the Sorbonne, and then the conversation turned to the faults and gaps in dictionaries. Marius interrupted the discussion by exclaiming, "And yet it is very agreeable to have the cross."

"That is funny!" Courfeyrac whispered to Jean Prouvaire.

"No, it is serious," the other answered."

## CHAPTER IV.

### AN ECLIPSE.

ISOLATION, pride, independence, a taste for nature, the absence of daily and material labour, the soul-struggles of chastity, and his benevolent ecstasy in the presence of creation, had prepared Marius for that possession which is called passion. His reverence for his father had gradually become a religion, and, like all religions, withdrew into the depths of the soul: something was wanting for the foreground, and love came. A whole month passed, during which Marius went daily to the Luxembourg: when the hour arrived, nothing could stop him.

"He is on duty," Courfeyrac said. Marius lived in ravishment, and it is certain that the young lady looked at him. In the end he had grown bolder, and went nearer the bench; still he did not pass in front of it, obeying at once the timid instincts and prudent instincts of lovers. He thought it advisable not to attract the father's attention, and hence arranged his stations behind trees and the pedestals of statues, with profound Machiavellism, so as to be seen as much as possible by the young lady and as little as possible by the old gentleman. At times he would be standing for half an hour motionless in the shadow of some Leonidas or Spartacus, holding in one hand a book, over which his eyes, gently raised, sought the lovely girl, and she, for her part, turned her charming profile toward him with a vague smile. While talking most naturally and quietly with the white-haired man, she fixed upon Marius all the reveries of a virginal and impassioned glance. It is an old and immemorial trick which Eve knew from the first day of the world, and which every woman knows from the first day of her life. Her mouth replied to the one and her eye answered the other.

It must be supposed, however, that M. Leblanc eventually noticed something, for frequently when Marius arrived he got up and began walking. He left their accustomed seat, and adopted at the other end of the walk the bench close to the Gladiator, as if to see whether Marius would follow them. Marius did not understand it, and committed this fault. "The father" began to become unpunctual, and no longer brought his "daughter" every day. At times he came alone, and then Marius did not stop, and this was another fault. Marius paid no attention to these symptoms; from the timid phase he had passed by a natural and fatal progress into a blind phase. His love was growing, and he dreamed of it every night, and then an unexpected happiness occurred to him, like oil on fire, and redoubled the darkness over his eyes. One evening at twilight he found on the bench which "M. Leblanc and his daughter" had just quitted,

a simple, unembroidered handkerchief, which, however, was white and pure, and seemed to him to exhale ineffable odours. He seized it with transport, and noticed that it was marked with the letters U. F. Marius knew nothing about the lovely girl, neither her family, her name, nor her abode; these two letters were the first thing of hers which he seized, adorable initials, upon which he at once began to erect his scaffolding. U. was evidently the Christian name: "Ursule," he thought, "what a delicious name!" He kissed the handkerchief, smelt it, placed it on his heart during the day, and at night upon his lips to go to sleep.

"I can see her whole soul!" he exclaimed.

This handkerchief belonged to the old gentleman, who had simply let it fall from his pocket. On the following days, when Marius went to the Luxembourg, he kissed the handkerchief, and pressed it to his heart. The lovely girl did not understand what this meant, and expressed her surprise by imperceptible signs.

"Oh modesty!" said Marius.

We have seen how Marius discovered, or fancied he had discovered, that her name was Ursule. Appetite comes while loving, and to know that her name was Ursule was a great deal already, but it was little. In three or four weeks Marius had devoured this happiness and craved another; he wished to know where she lived. He had made the first fault in falling into the trap of the Gladiator's bench; he had committed a second by not remaining at the Luxembourg when M. Leblanc went there alone; and he now committed a third, an immense one—he followed "Ursule." She lived in the Rue de l'Ouest, in the most isolated part, in a new three-storeyed house of modest appearance. From this moment Marius added to his happiness of seeing her at the Luxembourg the happiness of following her home. His hunger increased; he knew what her name was, her Christian name at least, the charming, the real name of a woman; he knew where she lived, and he now wanted to know who she was. One evening after following them home,

and watching them disappear in the gateway, he went in after them, and valiantly addressed the porter.

"Is that the gentleman of the first floor who has just come in?"

"No," the porter answered, "it is the gentleman of the third floor."

Another step made! This success emboldened Marius.

"Front?" he asked.

"Hang it," said the porter, "our rooms all look on the street."

"And what is the gentleman's position?" Marius continued.

"He lives on his property. He is a very good man, who does a deal of good to the wretched, though he is not rich."

"What is his name?" Marius added.

The porter raised his head and said,—

"Do you happen to be a police spy, sir?"

Marius went off much abashed, but highly delighted, for he was progressing.

"Good," he thought. "I know that her name is Ursule, that she is the daughter of a retired gentleman, and that she lives there, on a third floor in the Rue de l'Ouest."

On the morrow M. Leblanc made but a short appearance at the Luxembourg, and went away in broad daylight. Marius followed them to the Rue de l'Ouest, as was his habit, and on reaching the gateway M. Leblanc made his daughter go in first, then stopped, turned, and looked intently at Marius. The next day they did not come to the Luxembourg, and Marius waited in vain the whole day. At nightfall he went to the Rue de l'Ouest, and noticed a light in the third-floor windows, and he walked about beneath these windows till the light was extinguished. The next day there was no one at the Luxembourg; Marius waited all day, and then went to keep his night-watch under the windows. This took him till ten o'clock, and his dinner became what it could, for fever nourishes the sick man and love the lover.



Eight days passed in this way, and M. Leblanc and his daughter did not again appear at the Luxembourg. Marius made sorrowful conjectures, for he did not dare watch the gateway by day; he contented himself with going at night to contemplate the reddish brightness of the window-panes. He saw shadows pass now and then, and his heart beat.

On the eighth day, when he arrived beneath the windows, there was no light. "What," he said to himself, "the lamp is not lighted, can they have gone out?" He waited till ten o'clock, till midnight, till one o'clock, but no light was kindled at the third-floor windows, and nobody entered the house. He went away with very gloomy thoughts. On the morrow—for he only lived from morrow to morrow, and he had no to-day, so to speak—he saw nobody at the Luxembourg, as he expected, and at nightfall he went to the house. There was no light at the windows, the shutters were closed, and the third floor was in darkness. Marius rapped, walked in, and said to the porter,—

"The gentleman on the third floor?"

"Gone away," the porter answered.

Marius tottered, and asked feebly,—

"Since when?"

"Yesterday."

"Where is he living now?"

"I do not know."

"Then he did not leave his new address?"

"No."

And the porter, raising his nose, recognized Marius.

"What? it's you, is it?" he said; "why, you must really be a spy."

